the weekly Standard

OCTOBER 7, 2002 / $3.95

DEEPLY UNHAPPY DEMOCRATS
STEPHEN F. HAYES • DAVID TELL

The German Way

Christopher Caldwell on the angry adolescent of Europe

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the weekly Standard

THE WEEKLY STANDARD (ISSN 1083-3013) is published weekly (except the second week in January, the fourth week in April, the second week in July, and the fourth week in August) by News America Incorporated, 1211 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10036. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to THE WEEKLY STANDARD, P.O. Box 96127, Washington, DC 20077-7767. For subscription customer service in the United States, call 1-800-274-7293. For new subscription orders, please call 1-800-283-2014. Subscribers: Please send new subscription orders to THE WEEKLY STANDARD, P.O. Box 96153, Washington, DC 20090-6153; changes of address to THE WEEKLY STANDARD, P.O. Box 96127, Washington, DC 20077-7767. Please include your latest magazine mailing label. Allow 3 to 5 weeks for arrival of first copy and address changes. Yearly subscriptions, $78.00. Canadian/foreign orders require additional postage and must be paid in full prior to commencement of service. Canadian/foreign subscribers may call 1-850-682-7653 for subscription inquiries. Visa/MasterCard payment accepted. Cover price, $3.95. Back issues, $3.95 (includes postage and handling). Send manuscripts and letters to the editor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD, 1150 17th Street, N.W., Suite 505, Washington, DC 20036-4617. Unsolicited manuscripts must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. For a copy of THE WEEKLY STANDARD Privacy Policy, visit www.weeklystandard.com or write to Customer Service, THE WEEKLY STANDARD, 1150 17th St., NW, Suite 505, Washington, D.C. 20036. THE WEEKLY STANDARD Advertising Sales Office in Washington, DC, is 1-202-293-4900. Advertising Production: Call John L. Mackall 1-202-496-3354. Copyright 2002, News America Incorporated. All rights reserved. No material in THE WEEKLY STANDARD may be reprinted without permission of the copyright owner. THE WEEKLY STANDARD is a trademark of News America Incorporated.

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Me Too, Says Gephardt

Al Gore having made the argument that really important issues like war should somehow be above politics, and Tom Daschle having seconded Gore's motion, it was perhaps inevitable that Dick Gephardt would want to chime in, too. And sure enough, there in Friday's *New York Times* was a Gephardt op-ed solemnly intoning that "the politicization of national security has to end."

Well, why exactly? There are actually a lot of national security issues to argue about and debate these days, and argument and debate are the essence of politics. In fact, the specific complaint of the president that has given rise to so much Democratic heartburn is well worth an argument. The homeland security reorganization is being held up by the Senate because Bush wants to loosen civil service requirements so that homeland security workers can be fired more easily than your average public sector union member. Is this not worth at least a few hours of debate by the Senate?

There's something a little bit creepy in the demand of leading Democrats that the most interesting and important issues should be ruled out of order until the election is over. And there's also more than a little amnesia involved on Gephardt's part. "Eleven years ago," he writes in the *Times*, "the Persian Gulf war debate on Iraq took place after an election, which helped keep politics out of it."

What Gephardt doesn't mention is that he then did his best to make the Gulf War debate as political as possible. In late 1990, just weeks before the war's air campaign began, Gephardt told CNN that if Bush didn't seek congressional approval, "the Congress has to reach for the only tool left to it, which is to cut off funding for the war." He also co-sponsored a resolution to block military intervention and stick with sanctions against Saddam Hussein.

This is not to say that Gephardt was a consistent noninterventionist. In 1993, under President Clinton, Gephardt enthusiastically supported the president's decision to bomb Baghdad without congressional approval. And in 1995, when Clinton sent troops into Bosnia—again, without congressional approval!—Gephardt was one of his biggest cheerleaders for an energetic executive branch. "If America doesn't lead the world," Gephardt declared, "who will?"

These days, Gephardt prefers to whine: "To question people's patriotism for simply raising questions about how a war is to be fought and won—to say that anybody who doesn't support the president's particular policy on national security is against national security—is not only insulting, it's immoral." Touchy, touchy. No one has questioned Gephardt's or anyone's patriotism. That he's so easily insulted does, however, raise questions about his seriousness. ♦

More Kibitzing from the Peanut Gallery

Perhaps it was unfair of THE SCRAPBOOK to single out Bill Clinton in last week's issue ("The Kibitzer-in-Chief," September 30) for second-guessing the president's Iraq policy. After all, he's hardly the only ex-president desperately seeking attention.

That's right, there's also Jimmy Carter. Last week at a town hall meeting in Atlanta, the former president said that a war without allies against Iraq would be a "tragic mistake" and "the costs would be enormous." If his comments ring familiar, that's because they are.

Carter was, in fact, among the many prognosticators who opposed the use of force during the Gulf War, while wrongly predicting massive American casualties. "It would be a mistake at this point, obviously, to deploy any American troops halfway around the world in an area that's totally inaccessible to us," said the ex-president in August 1990 after Iraq occupied Kuwait. (He did stress that if the Iraqis invaded Saudi Arabia, then we should take military action.)

In November 1990, Carter stepped up the rhetoric, decrying the potential for a "massive, self-destructive, almost suicidal war" with Iraq. He also predicted that oil prices could spike to $75 to $80 a barrel. Later in December, Carter was still insisting a battle against Saddam Hussein would be "horrendous." Of course the complete opposite of all these things happened, and the war was "horrendous" only for the swiftly routed Iraqi army.

We'll let you know when, if ever, you should start taking Carter's warnings seriously. ♦

Bill Clinton Parodies Himself

On second thought, no one will ever outdo Bill Clinton in the annals of ludicrous public performances by an ex-president. The following immortal instance of Clintonian self-parody took place Friday September 27, on ABC's *Good Morning America* (with our thanks to ABC News for the transcript):

CHARLES GIBSON: "Do you agree with the administration's contention that we have a right to make pre-emp-

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tory attacks—what they're now calling anticipatory self-defense? That we have the right to attack a nation we believe threatens us?"

BILL CLINTON: "Well, I think it depends upon what is defined as belief."

As Dave Barry would say, we're not making this up. ♦

We're Laughing At You, Not With You

The surprise movie hit of the fall is *Barbershop*, a charming, modest, and occasionally hilarious little picture that depicts a day in a (mostly black) hair cuttery on the south side of Chicago. Perhaps the only person who doesn't like the movie is Jesse Jackson, who last week leaned on the producers—unsuccessfully it seems—to get the funniest scene deleted. That would be the one where Eddie the Barber takes jabs at several sacred cows of the civil rights orthodoxy, including Rosa Parks, the NAACP, and, yes, Jesse.

"You better not let Jesse Jackson hear you talk like that," one of the barbershop denizens tells Eddie. "F— Jesse Jackson!" he replies. Jackson reportedly hadn't seen the movie when he complained that it "insulted" civil rights leaders and tried "to turn tragedy into comedy." But we can assure him that audiences roar with laughter at the line.

The thing about comedy is that the funniest things of all are the things you're not allowed to laugh at. Jesse Jackson is pretty close to the top of that list, and he knows it. His career has survived any number of scandals, but laughter might do him in. That, and not the decent respect owed to the civil rights movement, explains his unusual foray into movie criticism. ♦

A Chip Off the Old Block

While Jesse Jackson was trying his hand at movie criticism, his son Rep. Jesse Jackson Jr. was trying cultural criticism, with about as much success.

On CNN's *Talk Back Live*, Jackson Jr. was asked about the mugging of Kansas City Royals first base coach Tom Gamboa by two crazed fans—a father and son who leapt from the stands at Chicago's Comiskey Park and jumped Gamboa before being gang-tackled by the entire Royals dugout. The congressman had a theory about the attack—blame the Bush administration!

"Well, we're living in a violence-charged environment from sports, but also from the very top of our administration. We need to take a deep breath. We need to obviously get back to some basic values and try and find alternative dispute resolutions. . . . We live in a violence-charged environment where almost all solutions result in some violent act, some desire to go to war, and we are not choosing peaceful resolutions to problems. That's why we need to take a deep breath." No, actually it sounds like we need *Barbershop II: The Next Generation.* ♦

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Casual

An Offer I Could Refuse

A few weeks ago a nice woman who lives in my building asked if I would be interested in teaching two morning sessions devoted to Montaigne to her book group. They would be meeting in Starved Rock, Illinois. My and my wife's expenses would be paid, and I would be given a $600 fee. The setting was quite beautiful, I was assured, and I could spend the afternoons walking in the woods with my wife.

That last point clinched it. Absolutely not, I thought. I love my wife, and I'm not going to let those mosquitoes, ticks, chiggers, poison ivy, and whole multitude of irritators have so open a shot at her. I'm not a big fan of nature. Unlike the old fight trainer Whitey Bimstein, who, asked what he thought of the country when working with a boxer at Grossinger's, said he thought it was a pretty nice place, I don't think it's such a nice place. I prefer to see it, when I have to see it at all, from out the window of a fast and comfortable car, preferably with the songs of Reynaldo Hahn on the CD player.

The combination of being in the country and partaking of adult education was an offer I had no difficulty refusing. It's not easy nowadays to have an utterly unfashionable opinion, but I wonder if my strong distaste for adult education qualifies. I can't take such stuff myself, and I don't want to dole it out—not even for a fee.

I had my first taste of adult education as an undergraduate at the University of Chicago, where, in order to arrange my schedule so that I could stay up all night and sleep late into the morning, I took a Shakespeare course in the university's downtown night division. My classmates were men and women in their forties through their seventies. Most were there not to work on an unfinished degree but for the sheer love of learning. Until then it had not occurred to me that the sheer love of learning could be a deeply disturbing thing.

This Shakespeare course taught me that one could grow older without growing smarter. Shakespeare does many things, so I shouldn't have been surprised that his plays could bring out the confident ignorance in people of all ages. My classmates were quite as clueless as I, not so much about Shakespeare as about the world. "Kids," the smarmy Art Linkletter used to say on his radio show, "say the darnedest things." But adults said things in that class even darneder. This made me sad.

Darren Gygi

The number of people signing up for adult education courses figures to rise as people live longer. Adult education is a regular feature of every so-called senior-citizen home; retirees flock to nearby universities and community colleges, ostensibly hungry for education, though perhaps hungrier still for something to do with their time.

As a quondam university teacher, I have on a few occasions been asked to give adult education courses. I can't bring myself to do it. What would be the point of my flogging away at course length to retired men and women about the majestic aesthetic virtues and wisdom of Henry James, Joseph Conrad, and Willa Cather? A lecture is one thing—it's an intellectual entertainment, a *divertissement*—but a full course suggests a much greater promise: a promise on which, I am fairly certain, I can't deliver.

I would, I suppose, be killing an hour or two in a long week for people who go in for adult education, but doing so would, I believe, kill more than time for me. Ignorance in the young is understandable; ignorance in the old, though also understandable, is depressing because of its hopelessness. And there is something slightly fraudulent about pretending to teach people things they are unlikely to have the time to put to use. How can you tell someone in, say, his early eighties that Henry James advises one be a person on whom nothing is lost when the likelihood is great that that person has already missed nearly everything?

Adult education is built on the premise of self-improvement—improvement right up to the moment, it would seem, of death. In his eighties, Santayana said that his physician advised him to lose fifteen pounds, evidently hoping, the philosopher noted, to have him perfectly healthy just in time for his demise. Adult education seems to operate on the same assumption.

Yet quite bright older people continue to sign up for one course after another: on philosophy, on contemporary fiction, on Zoroastrianism. I know a man, himself the author of serious books in American history, who recently took a course in the writing of Jack Kerouac. When he told me this, my first instinct was to tell him that, in a more sensible world, Kerouac ought to be taking courses from him. Shall we all end our days listening to teachers drone on about subjects we don't need to know? Will death arrive with neither a bang nor a whimper but a short course in the politics of the Balkans?

Joseph Epstein

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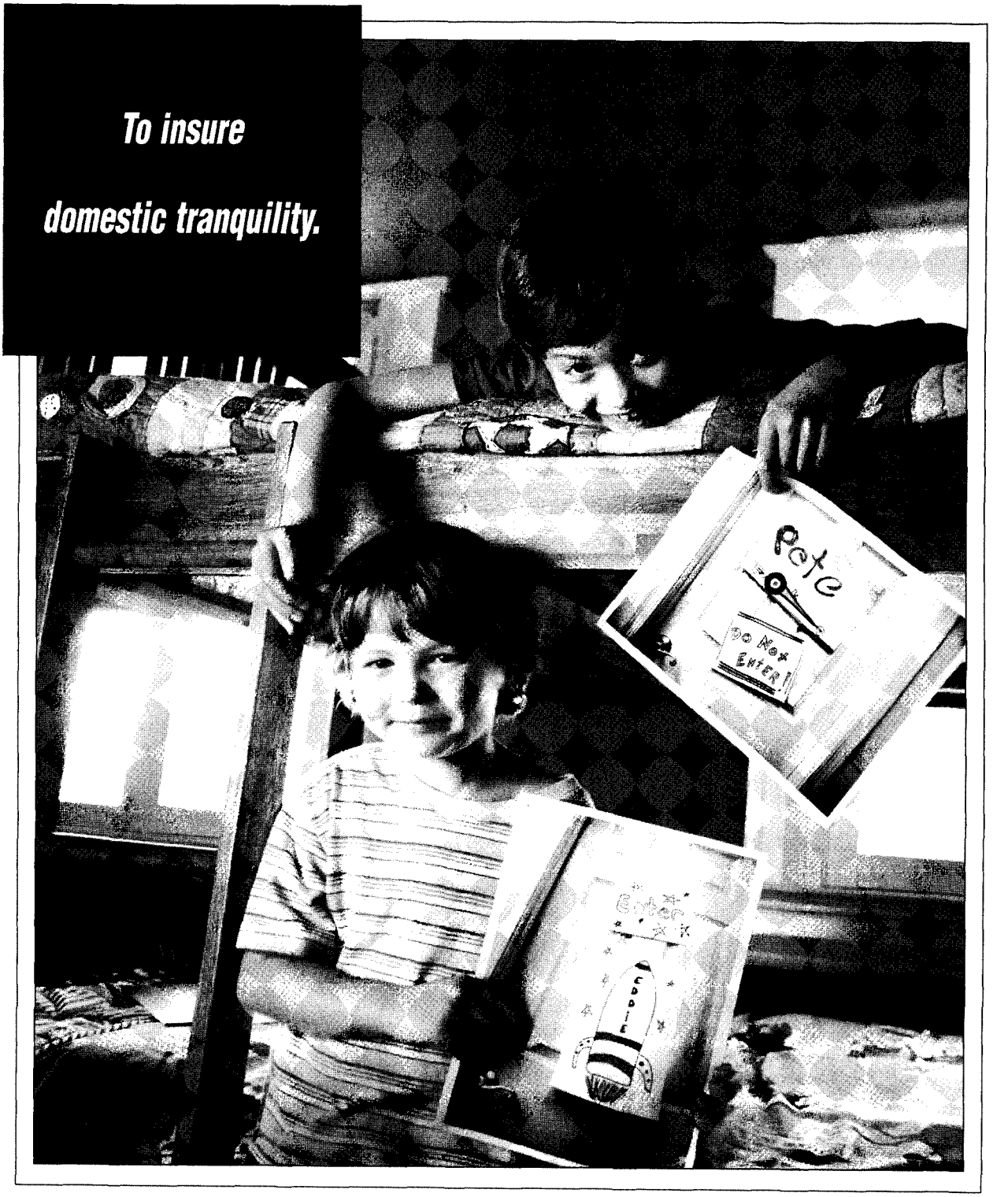

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Meyered in Doubt

Gregory L. Schneider in "Right Then," his review of Kevin J. Smant's biography of Frank S. Meyer, writes that Meyer "wrestled with the diverse and contradictory strands of conservative thought" (Sept. 23). But this misses Meyer's main point. He argued that in America, in contrast to Europe, there was no conflict between freedom and virtue, for the two had been inextricably linked together from the start of the nation. Meyer may have been in error here (though I think not), but this is the central argument of Meyer's *In Defense of Freedom: A Conservative Credo.*

As the editor of the Liberty Fund edition of *In Defense of Freedom and Related Essays*, I suggest that if The Weekly Standard's readers have not read Meyer on this thesis, they would profit by checking him out for themselves.

William C. Dennis
McLean, VA

War: What Is It Good For?

David Gelernter's "The Roots of European Appeasement" (Sept. 23) is quite original and extremely thought-provoking.

However, I would make one small amendment to it. Gelernter seems to believe (in line with conventional wisdom) that the Treaty of Versailles exacted such punitive measures on Germany that it caused World War II.

I would invite Gelernter and the readers of The Weekly Standard to examine the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, the treaty that Germany exacted from imperial Russia in 1917-1918 after she was defeated. The terms of Brest-Litovsk forced Russia to recognize the independence of Ukraine and Georgia; confirm the independence of Finland; give up Poland, the Baltic states, and part of what is now Belarus to Germany and Austria-Hungary; and cede Kars, Ardahan, and Batum to the Ottomans. Later, Germany demanded a large indemnity.

Compared with its own treatment of Russia, Germany's treatment by the Allies was mild indeed.

James H. Fink
Lincoln, MA

I fully agree with the incisive David Gelernter that World War I was the great significant event of the last century—and perhaps of a greater period.

However, there is some interest to be found in the period between the wars, in particular, the last-ditch attempt by the old order to reestablish itself; after all—although with somewhat changed borders and actors—empires were reestablished and/or sought during this period. World War II may therefore be regarded as a hiccup—an incalculably horrible hiccup—of history, with heartburn continuing through 1989.

This was comparable to the attempts, ultimately unsuccessful, to reestablish the old order in Europe during the course

of the Thirty Years' War of 1618 to 1648, accompanied by on-again, off-again fighting. The series of wars from 1914 to 1945 led similarly to the disintegration of the old order, even though the final blows took some time to be struck (as, incidentally, they took time after 1648 as well).

Sidney Brounstein
Redlands, CA

Bad Lessons From 9/11

Baltimore County Public Schools in Maryland was mentioned by Beth Henary in "The 9/11 Curriculum Wars" (Sept. 16) for its requirement that all social studies teachers "implement age-appropriate lessons using the events of September 11 to initiate a focus on themes such as democracy, patriotism, world cultures, government, and communities." Henary implies that this approach is better than a bureaucratic, centralized lesson plan designed by diversity-conscious administrators at the NEA.

For our Baltimore County Public Schools students, the plan backfired. Our eighth grader read and discussed a screed by Nat Hentoff from the *Village Voice*, arguing that post-September 11 security measures were "a rush to push aside the Bill of Rights." Our sixth grader was given a trivial (and largely irrelevant) piece from *CNN.com* recounting one Afghan American's sorrow about events in Afghanistan during the last thirty years. Only our fourth grader received an appropriate lesson, focusing on the meaning of the American flag.

Ten minutes spent looking at the photographs of those killed; a few minutes reading essays compiled by the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation (mentioned in the article); a few words of praise for the heroes lost in the attacks—wouldn't these have been the most suitable lessons of the day?

The Baltimore County Public Schools failed to deliver even on their own expressed aims—let alone the more important goals of conveying the enormous losses suffered on September 11, and reinforcing regard for America and its founding ideals.

Karen and David Hyman
Baltimore, MD

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Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank")

Can Israel survive without it?

Many people believe that the "conflict" between Israel and the Palestinians could be resolved if Israel were to consent to the creation of Palestinian state in Gaza and in all or most of Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank"). Even our president has advocated this outcome, contingent on the "good behavior" of the Palestinians. But would the creation of such a state be a solution to the conflict or, just as the Oslo Accord, another illusion that would exacerbate the conflict, rather than terminate it?

What are the facts?

The Root of the conflict. The conflict between Israel and the Arabs is not about borders and not about the Palestinians. The conflict is not about the size of Israel. It is about Israel's very existence. Israel, of whatever size and within whatever boundaries, is unacceptable to the Arabs. In surrendering strategic territory, Israel is gambling with its very life. The PLO still adheres to its infamous "phased plan." It calls for first creating a Palestinian state on any territory vacated by Israel and then using that state to foment a final allied Arab assault against the truncated Jewish state.

The Importance of territory. Many believe that in this age of missiles, territory is of little importance and that Israel should therefore not hesitate to relinquish "land for peace." But that is not the case. The Arab states have acquired over $50 billion of the most advanced armaments since the end of the Gulf War. And those are not just "conventional" weapons—enormous quantities of tanks, aircraft of all kinds, and much more. The Arab state possess large arsenals of chemical and biological weapons, and all of them work feverishly on the development of their nuclear potential. All of those weapons have only one single purpose: the destruction of the state of Israel. And that goal is not being cancelled for any agreements that Israel may make with the Palestinians. For both "conventional" war and for war of mass destruction, territory and topography are critical for self-defense and deterrence. The mountainous territory of Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") is an indispensable line of defense, especially for a country as small as Israel. It totally controls access to Israel's heartland from the east. Israel needs this high ground for defense, to be able to peer deeply into the enemy's territory and to get early warning of any attack. The high ground allows Israel to detect missiles while they are still in the launch stage and to destroy them, with the Arrow or other sophisticated anti-missile systems. Unlike the U.S., Israel cannot maintain a fleet of nuclear submarines for "second strike" deterrence. But it can maintain dozens of mobile missile launchers safe in underground tunnels hewn into the rock of the Judean mountains.

Would the "West Bank" be demilitarized? Even those who want Israel to retreat to its pre-1967 borders are agreed that the evacuated areas must be demilitarized. But that would be useless. Because the Palestinians will have thousands of trained soldiers, camouflaged as their police force. In case of war against Israel, these troops could be helicoptered in minutes to their positions, with armored forces reaching them within the same night. In any case, it is highly doubtful that the surrounding hostile Arab nations would allow such a military vacuum to exist. And finally, there is the matter of terrorism. There are over fifteen Palestinian terror organizations that neither Yassir Arafat nor any other Palestinian authority can control. There would be a constant rain of Katyusha rockets launched into the Tel Aviv area and into the entire coastal plain, which is only nine miles wide at its waist. It contains 80% of Israel's population and of its industrial and military potential. Ben Gurion airport, every incoming and outgoing flight, would be subject to mortar fire or shoulder-held Stinger attack. Does anybody doubt that the Arabs would not exploit that irresistible opportunity?

> "Without Judea/Samaria (the 'West Bank') Israel would be totally indefensible; therefore, neither the purposes of Israel nor those of the United States would be served by Israel's relinquishing control of the 'West Bank'."

Without the "West Bank" Israel would be totally indefensible. That is the professional opinion of over 100 U.S. generals and admirals. Israel's strong defensive posture makes it most inadvisable for Israel's enemies to attack her. But once this defensive strength is removed, a coordinated war against Israel can only be a matter of time. The example and fate of Czechoslovakia, which preparatory to the Second World War was dismantled and shorn of its defensive capacity, insistently comes to mind. What does all this mean to the United States? In a part of the world in which our country has the most far-reaching geopolitical stakes, Israel is the only democracy, the only country that is unquestioningly aligned with us. It is the guarantor of American interests in the area. With Israel in a position of weakness, the role of the United States in the area would collapse and radical states such as Syria, Iraq and Iran would dominate. That is why, despite the heady prospect of "peace in our time," neither the purposes of Israel nor those of the United States would be served by Israel's relinquishing control over the "West Bank."

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the weekly Standard

The Democrats' Tantrum

MR. DURBIN: As I return to Illinois, people tell me over and over again: Senator, when you go back, please go to the floor of the Senate and express our feelings that we do need a coalition of force, not just for the principle and value of it, but for the military significance of it . . .

MR. REID: Will the Senator yield for a question?

MR. DURBIN: Yes, I am happy to yield.

MR. REID: I ask my friend from Illinois, is it true, when you returned to Illinois, people were asking about things other than Iraq?

MR. DURBIN: Exactly true.

MR. REID: Are people concerned about the stumbling, staggering, faltering economy?

MR. DURBIN: I say to the Senator from Nevada, that is where I was headed next. This chart, which I have brought to the floor, talks about the lost private sector jobs in the last 50 years . . .

—Debate about "Iraq" on the Senate floor, September 20

For weeks on end already, while the Bush administration has been attempting to rally international support for a drive to depose the Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein, congressional Democrats have been laboring to direct domestic attention away from this looming conflict and toward our "stumbling, staggering, faltering economy," instead. They have not been especially subtle about it; that little piece of low-rent vaudeville quoted above is perfectly typical of the project. Nor have Democrats been all that secretive about what motivates them. They say so themselves, almost daily, in the newspapers and on the talk shows: Having weighed Iraq as a potential political issue in the coming midterm elections and—most of them—having adjudged it a "loser," congressional Democrats are trying to change the subject.

But President Bush is not cooperating. He remains preoccupied, not unreasonably it seems to us, with the military and diplomatic requirements of a pending U.S. land invasion in the Persian Gulf. And for some reason, ordinary Americans, too, likely November swing voters very much included, are more inclined to observe the unfolding of a major war than they are to watch Dick Durbin and Harry Reid discuss long-term private-sector employment trends. In other words: The subject is not changing. Consequently, Democrats are frustrated. No, more than frustrated: They are hot. They feel themselves wronged. They are even beginning to suggest that this whole Iraq business has been timed for the convenience of Republican campaign strategists—that bombs will fall and people will die primarily to ensure that Denny Hastert stays speaker of the House.

"I have not raised those doubts, but many have," says the new, new, new, new Albert Gore, *ex officio* leader of his party, promptly seeing those doubts and raising them a hundred. "The president is publicly taunting Democrats with the political consequences of a 'no' vote" on the use of force against Iraq, Gore complains, "even as the Republican National Committee runs pre-packaged advertising based on the same theme." Could it be that Bush is acting in what he sincerely believes to be the national and global interest? No, that's not how the former vice president reads the White House: "From the outset," Gore concludes, "the administration has operated in a manner calculated to please the portion of its base that occupies the far right."

Majority leader Tom Daschle, in turn, has now put on his reddest face and huskiest voice for a "spontaneous" trip to the Senate well, where he has bitterly denounced both President Bush and Vice President Cheney for having "politicized" the war by impugning the "patriotism" of Democrats who resist or question its prospect. "Outrageous," pronounces Daschle, careful to choke on the word for maximum effect. The president "ought to apologize."

No, the president oughtn't.

In their particulars, the Daschle and Gore complaints merit only a moment's consideration and even quicker dismissal. Daschle's are a transparent contrivance. Early last week, stumping for a Republican challenger in New Jersey, the president did let pass his lips a rather eye-opening subordinate clause about how the incumbent Senate is "not interested in the security of the American people." Granted, the remark was coarse, undignified, excessive, what have you. But it was not about Iraq, not a bit of it; in fact, it was immediately followed by an explic-

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it appeal to bipartisanship in the struggle against terrorism and terrorist regimes. Nor was Dick Cheney speaking of Iraq—the word appeared nowhere in his speech—when, at an earlier appearance in Kansas on behalf of Republican House candidate Adam Taff, the vice president innocuously predicted that Taff "will be a fine partner for us in the important work ahead."

Furthermore, Bush has never once "taunted" Democrats—or ventured any other sort of public speculation—over what might happen if they opposed him on Iraq-related legislation. Nor has the Republican National Committee ever run a single ad remotely like the ones Al Gore decries. True to form, Gore appears very deliberately to have made this stuff up. Much the way he has invented yet another group of "far right" bogeymen. Can it have escaped Gore's attention that the man who was not so long ago his own handpicked vice-presidential running mate, Sen. Joseph Lieberman, now supports the same Iraq policy Bush has purportedly "calculated" for exclusive appeal to the "far right"? Surely Gore has noticed, too, that what exists of a genuine "far right" in American politics—in league with the equally marginal "far left"—actually *opposes* the Bush administration's stated Iraq objectives.

Now, it is hardly news, and would otherwise hardly be worth mentioning, that a Democratic Senate majority leader has laid an entirely synthesized "outrage" at the feet of a Republican president. And certainly none of us will fall over dead to discover that Al Gore has told a lie. But there is something else and more important to say about the current controversy over war and politics. And oddly enough, though it would seem an obvious point, almost nobody (our friends at the *New Republic* are a notable and honorable exception) has so far thought or dared to say it out loud.

It happens to be *true* that President Bush has "politicized" the question of overthrowing Saddam: not by the underhanded means Messrs. Daschle and Gore allege, but merely by raising the subject to begin with. And it is perfectly *appropriate* that Bush has invited "political" debate about the issue directly in advance of a federal election, the decision to embark on a war being the gravest and most consequential one a democratic nation can ever make. And yes, of course, it would also be perfectly appropriate, and not at all "unpatriotic," for the Democratic party, were it convinced that Bush had misapprehended the threat posed by Saddam Hussein, responsibly and aggressively to dispute the president's analysis. Or, failing that, to oppose the war outright. This magazine, though we view continued Ba'ath party rule in Baghdad as an intolerable and irremediable danger, and therefore consider war inevitable, would welcome that debate. And we think American voters are entitled to hear it now—and formally participate, by their November ballots, in its outcome.

Here's the thing though: There is no such meaningful debate in the United States at present. And not because the Republican party has suppressed it, but because the Democratic party has feared and failed to mount it. Have a closer look at Al Gore's speech last week to the Commonwealth Club of San Francisco, which now serves—if not by virtue of its author's stature, then simply by default—as the "best" and most "systematic" Democratic argument "against" the Bush administration's proposed course of action in the Persian Gulf. It is clear from this document that Gore holds the president's policies in abject contempt. But it is not at all clear why that might be.

On the one hand, Gore is "deeply concerned" that a war with Iraq would stretch the Pentagon thin and thus "seriously damage our ability to win the war against terrorism" still underway. On the other hand, Gore thinks we are "perfectly capable of staying the course" against Osama bin Laden "while simultaneously taking those steps necessary to build an international coalition to join us in taking on Saddam Hussein in a timely fashion." Which might well entail a war, since Iraq "does pose a serious threat" that is "impossible to completely deter" and "will continue for as long as Saddam is in power."

On the other hand again, however, "the rule of law will quickly be replaced by the reign of fear" should President Bush claim a "uniquely American right to preemptively attack whomsoever he may deem represents a potential future threat." The United States must proceed multilaterally, through the United Nations, Gore insists; the president must make "every effort to obtain a fresh demand from the Security Council for prompt, unconditional compliance by Iraq within a definite period of time." Gore does not explain how this, the one "specific" policy recommendation contained in his speech, is the slightest bit inconsistent with what Bush is doing already. Nor does Gore explain why an American attack on Iraq must await the passage of new U.N. resolutions, given that he freely admits, almost in the same breath, that "existing resolutions from *1991* are sufficient from a legal standpoint" to justify unilateral military initiatives.

But enough. This is not a grown-up argument, either pro or contra. It is incoherence, a tantrum. And it is an embarrassment that no other leading Democrat has yet managed to do much better. The president of the United States says readiness is necessary because war may soon prove inescapable. "We have our doubts but we're not sure" is not an adequate answer—not from a political party that controls the upper house of Congress and so pretends to shared responsibility in the conduct of our national affairs. Yes, Virginia, war is a legitimate subject for full-scale "politicization." A Democratic party that ducks its obligation to join in such a politics is a party that deserves to suffer for it at the polls.

—David Tell, for the Editors

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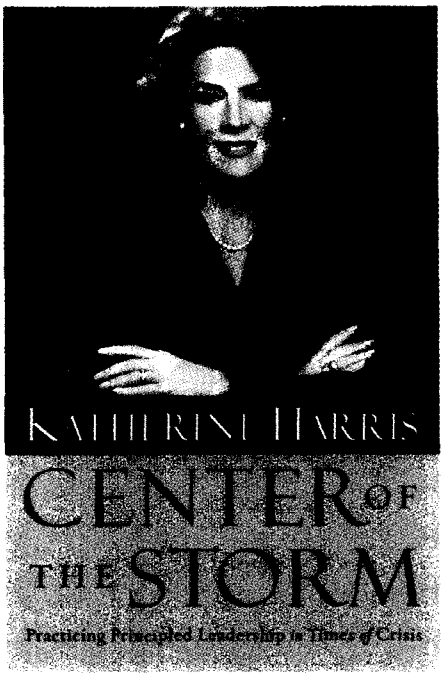

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War Is Hell . . . for the Democrats

Gore and Daschle flail at Bush.

BY STEPHEN F. HAYES

IS IT POSSIBLE for two top 2004 Democratic presidential candidates to knock themselves out of contention on consecutive days some two years before the election? Probably not. But as Washington last week descended into a sour partisanship not seen since the last presidential election, both Al Gore and Tom Daschle may have done significant damage to their chances in the next one.

Gore ripped the Bush administration's war on terror more directly than any Democrat has thus far. In an aggressive speech last Tuesday at the Commonwealth Club in San Francisco, the former vice president suggested, among many other things, that the war on terror has been a failure, that a war on Saddam Hussein would be a dangerous distraction, and that the Bush administration is politicizing national security. Daschle, not to be outdone, took to the Senate floor the following day and picked up on that last point, offering a furious attack on the administration for campaigning for Republicans on the war. In the space of less than 24 hours, Americans saw the fundamental flaws of the top two Democrats: Gore is too much; Daschle is too little, too late.

Many Democrats, even some on the antiwar left of the party who were delighted to see Bush challenged, say privately that Gore's speech was fundamentally self-serving. Just as congressional Democrats were hoping to put the Iraq debate behind them and change the conversation back to the economy, Gore prominently asserted himself as leader of the opposition, making news on Iraq the only way he possibly could have: by doing what amounts to a reversal of his previous position.

Throughout the eight years of the Clinton administration Gore was, rhetorically at least, a hawkish, no-nonsense adviser to the president on Saddam Hussein. In January 1998, Gore said on CNN that his patience with Saddam Hussein was running out. "Saddam must comply with the mandates of the world community. And if he does not, then the resolutions spell out exactly what he can face," Gore warned. "If he believes that this is an indefinite process, he's sadly mistaken. If he believes that he does not have to comply with U.N. resolutions, he's simply wrong. And he'll find that out."

Gore's transformation last week into the leading critic of a war on Saddam thus came as a particular shock to hawkish Democrats like the editors of the *New Republic*. "In typical Democratic style," they lamented, "Gore didn't say he opposed the war. In fact, he endorsed the goal of regime change—before presenting a series of qualifications that would likely make that goal impossible."

Aides to Gore suggested his speech would provide a sneak preview of the new, consequences-be-damned, uncandidate. Well, the message may have been new (he reportedly consulted with the likes of Hollywood director Rob Reiner), but the rant was vintage Gore. It was filled with factual inaccuracies and exaggerations. Gore said that those who planned and conducted the September 11 attacks have "gotten away with it." He dismissed the crushing of the Taliban as merely the defeat of a "fifth-rate military power" (not that he was likely to poll well anyway among the Special Forces units who've been enjoying that walk in the park for the last year). He argued that the Bush administration is refocusing on Saddam Hussein because defeating al Qaeda "is proving to be more difficult and lengthy than was predicted." And he noted that all of this is happening in "this high political season."

Gore initially distanced himself from suggestions that he was accusing Bush of being motivated by politics, saying, "I have not raised these doubts, but many have." But moments later, after raising precisely those doubts and detailing what he sees as politicization, he claimed that "all of this [is] apparently in keeping with a political strategy."

Gore's speech has been dissected many times over. But a neglected point that may come back to haunt him was his implicit depreciation of the military—not just in describing the operations in Afghanistan as easier than they were, but in his odd criticism of the Bush administration's objective of "regime change." Said Gore: "In the case of Iraq, it would be difficult to go it alone but it's theoret-

Stephen F. Hayes is a staff writer at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

Illustration by Earl Keleny

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ically possible to achieve our goals in Iraq unilaterally."

Theoretically possible? Does Gore doubt the capability of the U.S. military to carry out its mission in Iraq? He did say, after all, that he is "deeply concerned that the course of action we are presently embarking upon with respect to Iraq has the potential to seriously damage our ability to win the war against terrorism and to weaken our ability to lead the world in this new century."

Gore did not take kindly to similarly baseless fears when he was vice president. In 1994, with 21,000 U.S. troops stationed in Haiti and Saddam Hussein amassing forces on the Iraq-Kuwait border, Oliver North (then running for the Senate in Virginia) worried aloud about military readiness. Gore's response was ferocious: North, he said, was "giving aid and comfort" to Saddam Hussein. "It is despicable, it is unpatriotic, and as is often the case with statements from Oliver North, it is also patently untrue. He has put the rankest form of partisanship ahead of the national interest in a manner which is insulting to our armed forces, to our flag, to the soldiers who are prepared to go into battle if necessary."

If the Commonwealth Club speech was the new Al Gore, then the new Al Gore is a lot like the 2000 version—a calculating, opportunistic, and condescending political animal. And also, it must be said, not overly concerned with the congressional wing of his party.

The Gore speech came as Senate majority leader Tom Daschle and his House counterpart Dick Gephardt had begun trying to shift attention away from the war by agreeing to an expedited vote on an Iraq resolution in Congress. Daschle had delivered a much-ballyhooed attack calling the Bush economy "atrocious"—a speech that might have failed to change the debate in any event but that was instantly forgotten once Gore went after the administration's war record.

When Daschle took to the Senate

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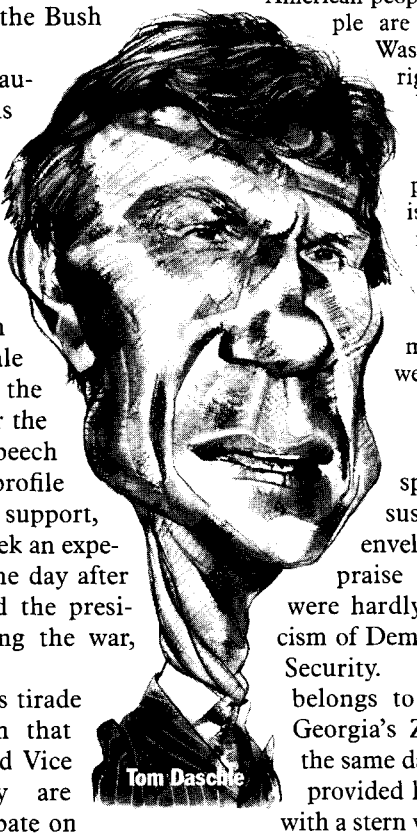
floor on Wednesday, the economy was the furthest thing from his mind. If Gore's speech was about the politics of 2004, Daschle's was primarily about the politics of 2002. As much as the Democratic base may have appreciated a strong voice in opposition to the administration, it's not clear that they wanted that voice to be Gore's hectoring monotone. So Daschle, rather than concede the role of opposition leader to Gore, launched his own attack on the Bush administration.

But the ever-cautious Daschle is seemingly always a step behind the curve. When Bush announced his intention to seek congressional approval for action against Iraq, Daschle sought to slow the process down. After the president's U.N. speech won him high-profile Democratic support, Daschle began to seek an expedited vote. Now, the day after Al Gore excoriated the president for politicizing the war, Daschle followed.



Daschle built his tirade around the notion that President Bush and Vice President Cheney are politicizing the debate on Iraq. Cheney, in fact, said nothing about Iraq in the speech Daschle cited. And Bush, in the passage Daschle found so offensive, was speaking not about Iraq, but about unionizing the Department of Homeland Security. Said a visibly angry Daschle: "I read in the paper this morning, now even the president—the president is quoted in the *Washington Post* this morning as saying that the Democratic-controlled Senate is 'not interested in the security of the American people.'"

Here are the president's words:

> So I asked Congress to give me the flexibility necessary to be able to deal with the true threats of the 21st century by being able to move the right people to the right place at the right time, so we can better assure America we're doing everything possible. The House responded, but the Senate is more interested in special interests in Washington and not interested in the security of the American people. I will not accept a Department of Homeland Security that does not allow this President, and future Presidents, to better keep the American people secure. And people are working hard in Washington to get it right in Washington, both Republicans and Democrats. See, this isn't a partisan issue. This is an American issue. This is an issue which is vital to our future. It'll help us determine how secure we'll be.

Bush's comments—special interests versus national security—enveloped as they were in praise of bipartisanship, were hardly the harshest criticism of Democrats on Homeland Security. That distinction belongs to one of their own, Georgia's Zell Miller, who on the same day Daschle exploded, provided his fellow Democrats with a stern warning.

> Why was the U.S. Senate so fixated on protecting jobs instead of protecting lives? The U.S. Senate's refusal to grant this president and future presidents the same power that four previous presidents have had will haunt the Democratic party worse than Marley's ghost haunted Ebenezer Scrooge. Why did they put workers' rights above American lives? Why did that 2002 U.S. Senate—on the one-year anniversary of 9/11—with malice and forethought, deliberately weaken the powers of the president in time of war? And then why did this Senate—in all its puffed up vainglory—rear back and deliver the ultimate slap in the face of the president by not even having the decency to give him an up or down vote on his bill? This is unworthy of this great body. It is demeaning and ugly and over the top.

Daschle's speech was not in fact a spur-of-the-moment reaction to a newspaper article. Daschle ticked off a long and detailed list of alleged administration offenses, and Democrats have privately made this case to reporters since last spring. A fair amount of thought and planning had gone into the outburst.

Indeed, the *Washington Post*'s account the next day, in an article headlined "Daschle: President is Politicizing Security Debate," offered this nugget: "Senate Democrats are so concerned that Sen. Paul D. Wellstone (MN) could lose his seat because he will likely vote against the Bush resolution, that they are drafting an alternative resolution 'because he has to have something to give him cover,' a Democratic Senate aide said." What's striking about this entire debate is the extent to which Democrats—including several who support the president on Iraq—argue in one breath that the Bush administration is inappropriately politicizing the debate, and in the very next praise Tom Daschle for protecting Democrats in close races.

"There's a deep suspicion on the Democratic side about the president's motives on this," a prominent Democratic adviser told me last week. "He's mentioning this in campaign appearances, for God's sake. The president is, in a very ham-handed way, trying to squeeze politics into the debate."

Then, not two minutes later, I asked the same adviser about Daschle and his speech. "There are members who are in tight races who don't want a big brouhaha on this," he said. "My theory is that he's trying to protect his members by saying to the White House that these things should not be political. And he deserves a lot of credit for that. In the end, Daschle and the leaders are looking at a bunch of really close races."

In other words, what's politicization for thee is not for me. ♦

Illustration by Thomas Fluharty

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The Emerging Democratic Texas?

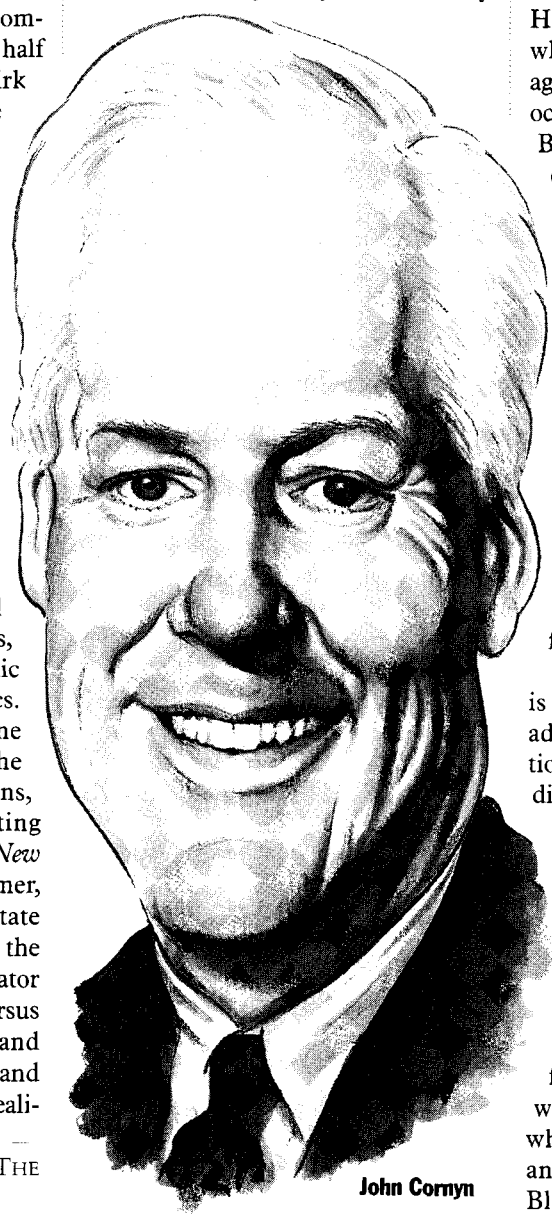
Probably not this year. BY FRED BARNES

Austin, Texas

IF DEMOCRAT RON KIRK wins a Senate seat in Texas this fall, it will be a defeat for Republicans with dire implications far beyond Texas. Yes, it will signify the end of the GOP's short reign—less than a decade—as absolute ruler of Texas politics. Texas will be politically competitive again. But that's not the half of it. Worse for Republicans, a Kirk victory would all but doom the Republican bid to recapture the Senate and allow Democratic majority leader Tom Daschle to afflict President Bush for another two years. And the election of Kirk would tend to confirm the theory, plausible but not yet proven, that a Democratic majority is emerging in America.

Let's be honest about Kirk's chances: They aren't great, but an upset is possible. After he won the Democratic nomination in April, the national media trekked to Texas and crowned Kirk, the black ex-mayor of Dallas, the most charming and charismatic new figure in American politics. "He brings to the race the one intangible that can trump the advantages of money, connections, even issues—he has captivating charm," wrote Peter Boyer in the *New Yorker*. For a spell over the summer, Kirk actually led his GOP foe, state attorney general John Cornyn, in the contest to succeed Republican senator Phil Gramm. It was a tortoise versus hare race, Cornyn the plodding and cautious tortoise, Kirk the flashy and error-prone hare. By Labor Day, reality had begun to set in. Polls now show Kirk trailing—by a few points in most polls, but by a dozen in a survey last week by John Zogby.

The Democrats-as-majority theory that's being tested in Texas is the brainchild of liberal political writers John Judis and Ruy Teixeira. The party now "differs substantially from the New Deal Democratic coalition that dominated American politics from 1932 to 1968," they write in their new book, *The Emerging Democratic Majority*. "Today the Democrats are increasingly a party of professionals, women, and minorities." These groups are growing, especially Hispanics. Judis and Teixeira insist "Hispanics are making the Democratic party their political home." It's these groups the Kirk campaign is counting on to defeat Cornyn.



John Cornyn

Illustration by Drew Friedman

The Kirk formula is straightforward: He must win at least 85 percent of the black vote, 65 percent of the Hispanic vote, and 35 percent of the white, or Anglo, vote. These percentages would not have produced a Democratic victory four years ago in Texas. But 2002 is different. With a black candidate for senator and a Hispanic, Tony Sanchez, as the Democratic nominee for governor, both blacks and Hispanics will turn out in far greater numbers, thus becoming a bigger share of the electorate—not 20 percent to 25 percent, but 30 percent to 35 percent. And Kirk, 48, is also different, a business-friendly Democrat with such strong ties to Republican plutocrats and professionals that he'll cut deeply into the Republican base in the Dallas metropolitan area. That's the Democratic formula, anyway.

What the Kirk coalition must erase is a significant generic Republican advantage in Texas. In recent elections, voters have preferred GOP candidates by 6 to 8 percentage points. In 1998, Republicans won all 27 statewide races. The best news for Republicans was that George W. Bush captured better than 40 percent of the Hispanic vote running for governor that year and again in 2000 as a presidential candidate. The biggest worry for Democrats is not that Cornyn will match Bush (he won't); it's whether they can increase turnout and overcome what Professor Earl Black of Rice University calls the

Fred Barnes is executive editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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"under-utilization of Hispanics."

So far the evidence is not encouraging for Democrats. Their voter registration drive initially set a goal of 500,000 new Hispanic voters, then cut it to 100,000 before finally deciding a get-out-the-vote effort on Election Day would suffice. A Hispanic at the top of the "dream team" ticket of Sanchez and Kirk is bound to stir some Hispanic enthusiasm. But Republican strategists don't see much evidence of this, and they believe many Hispanics will vote for Sanchez but leave the Senate race blank. One poll found a 14 percent drop-off in votes from the governor's race. Cornyn says Republicans start with 25 percent of the Hispanic vote and believes 40 percent is attainable. But Republicans "still have work to do" among Hispanics, he says.

For a black candidate, Kirk is unusually well positioned to do well among whites. "He's sort of larger than life," a Cornyn aide admits. His first TV ad presents testimonials by white Republicans in Dallas impressed by his record as mayor. He attended Bush's presidential inauguration. He stresses pro-business themes. He endorsed the Bush tax cut. Where Kirk lands ideologically is unclear, but a campaign aide, Robert Gibbs, calls him "a DLC type," referring to the moderate Democratic Leadership Council. Republicans have sought to stigmatize him as a liberal, hoping it might dislodge 50,000 to 100,000 Joe Sixpacks who normally vote Democratic. It might work. In any case, attracting 35 percent of the Anglo vote will be difficult for Kirk.

His biggest problem may be inexperience and lack of discipline. The *Austin American-Statesman* wrote in late September that the Kirk campaign is "floundering" because of both "errors in judgment and remarks made in haste." Kirk scheduled a fund-raiser in Boston hosted by a man connected with Swiss banks accused of holding funds of Holocaust victims. He blamed Cornyn, as attorney general, for presenting racist testimony in a murder case. In truth, Cornyn asked the Supreme Court to bar the testimony.

Kirk's worst stumble involved Iraq. Speaking to black and Hispanic veterans in San Antonio, he said the well-to-do might not back a war if their kids were sent to fight. "I wonder how excited they'd be if I get to the United States Senate and I put forth a resolution that says the next time we go to war the first 500,000 kids have to come from families who earn a million dollars or more," Kirk said. He later apologized for this comment, and his position on Iraq has changed dramatically. At first he sounded like Daschle, saying the United States should first get international backing for a war against Iraq and develop plans for postwar Iraq. Then he said Bush had made the case for war in his United Nations speech. Finally he endorsed the White House-drafted resolution approving military action.

Anxiety over Kirk's unfamiliarity with national issues may have prompted his campaign to balk at debating Cornyn on *Meet the Press* on October 6. Cornyn accepted immediately, figuring host Tim Russert would surely raise the Iraq issue—to Kirk's detriment. Kirk said he needed to line up debates in Texas before accepting an out-of-state invitation. One reporter covering the race asked Cornyn and Kirk the exact same questions about national issues. Kirk fared poorly by comparison.

Cornyn, 50, lacks Kirk's sparkling personality, but he's a skilled politician who's run statewide three times and won. He reminds reporters of Bush in one respect: He stays on message, never winging it. Cornyn's looks—white hair and an inoffensive manner—are misleading. "He's a tough trench fighter," says Alan Sager, the Austin GOP chairman. And he's usually underestimated. He beat a strong favorite for a district judgeship in San Antonio in 1984 and was elected to the Texas Supreme Court in 1990 after trailing for most of the race. Running for attorney general in 1998, he was expected to finish third in the GOP primary. He won and easily disposed of his Democratic foe, Jim Mattox.

Cornyn has so many advantages—money, experience, and help from Bush, who spoke at a Cornyn fundraiser in Houston last week—it's hard to envision him losing. But there's a way. Kirk has two things that matter: a campaign team that knows how to stage a strong finishing kick, and Kirk himself. Campaign manager Carol Butler ran Debbie Stabenow's Senate race in Michigan in 2000. Stabenow came from behind three weeks out to win. And Kirk is not running on what he believes but on who he is, a black who transcends race. A Democrat quoted by Boyer in the *New Yorker* called him the Democratic Colin Powell and suggested it would say something bad about Texas if he loses. The fear among Republicans is that Texas pride could kick in, with Anglos voting for Kirk to vindicate their state and its reputation. That could happen, but it probably won't. ♦

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Chuck Schumer's Worst Nightmare

Meet Miguel Estrada, "stealth missile."

BY MELISSA SECKORA

"IT'S NOT ENOUGH for you to say, 'I will follow the law, Senator.' We need to be convinced that nominees aren't far out of the mainstream," snarled Chuck Schumer, chairing last week's confirmation hearing for Miguel Estrada before the Senate Judiciary Committee. "Clarence Thomas came before this distinguished committee and said he had no views on important constitutional issues of the day. . . . But the minute [he] got to the Court, he was doctrinaire. He obviously had deeply held views that he shielded from the Committee. . . . And there's still a lot of simmering blood up here about that."

Simmering blood was about all that was up at the hearing for Estrada, President Bush's nominee to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit. Democrats spent much of the hearing trying to tarnish Estrada's credibility on the matter of whether he had tried to prevent Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy from hiring liberal law clerks. Mainly, though, the majority used the occasion to urge Estrada to ask the Justice Department to release private decision memos he had written while working in the Clinton-era solicitor general's office—a demand instigated by his former superior, Paul Bender, who calls Estrada "too much of an ideologue to be an appellate judge." This is the same Paul Bender, however, who gave Estrada a glowing performance evaluation, laid out for the committee by Orrin Hatch: "States the operative facts and applicable law completely and persuasively . . . with concern for fairness, clarity, simplicity, and conciseness. . . . Is extremely knowledgeable. . . . Inspires co-workers by example."

Miguel Estrada

Illustration by Earl Keleny

Melissa Seckora is an editorial associate with National Review.

The White House refused to release the Estrada memos back in June. But Schumer announced that he "would be reluctant" to hold a vote without them. Such writings have been released in the past, Schumer maintained, in cases where other materials were not available to show how a nominee would vote as a judge, and this was such a case.

Schumer proceeded to enter into the record memos written by Judge Frank Easterbrook when Easterbrook had worked in the solicitor general's office, claiming them as precedent. But a Justice Department official insists the memos must have been leaked. "Easterbrook's SG work product," the official said, "was not released by either the Justice Department or the nominee—it seems to have been an unauthorized disclosure by an unknown individual." The official denied that the department has provided the Senate any "sensitive, confidential legal recommendations" written by any individuals from the SG's office who are now sitting judges. And the memos produced by the department back in 1987 during the confirmation hearing for Robert Bork, a former solicitor general, were not of a deliberative nature. Furthermore, all of the living former solicitors general—from Archibald Cox to Seth Waxman—have concurred that the release of such candid information would harm the "unbridled, open exchange of ideas" required for "high-level decisionmaking."

Schumer wouldn't let go. "We're trying to figure out how you think here," he complained to the nominee at the end of the hearing. "You're not letting us get to know you. . . . I still want to see the SG memos."

Born in Honduras in 1961, Estrada came to the United States as a teenager speaking little English. He graduated with honors from Columbia College and Harvard Law School. He clerked for Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy, served as a U.S.

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attorney in the Southern District of New York, and worked in the Justice Department as an assistant U.S. solicitor general from 1992 to 1997. He is currently a partner with the D.C. law firm Gibson, Dunn, & Crutcher, where his primary practice is appellate law.

Estrada has argued 15 cases before the Supreme Court, he received a unanimous "well-qualified" rating from the American Bar Association, and he has been described by Ron Klain, former counsel to Vice President Al Gore, as someone who will "faithfully apply the precedents of his court, and the Supreme Court, without regard to his personal views or his political perspectives."

The White House is battling hard for Estrada, who, if confirmed, would be the first Hispanic on the D.C. Circuit. Even White House counsel Alberto Gonzales, thought by most Beltway conservatives to be Estrada's competition for a seat on the Supreme Court, took to the op-ed page of the *Washington Post* the day of the hearing to defend Estrada's record and urge the Democrats to move faster to confirm judicial nominees.

The White House has also taken pains with the Hispanic groups—and almost every major Latino organization is supporting Estrada. Even La Raza and the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF), while they express "grave concerns" about Estrada's judicial temperament, have not yet opposed his nomination.

The two exceptions are the Congressional Hispanic Caucus (all Democrats) and the Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund (PRLDEF). The latter has gone so far as to imply that Estrada is not "Hispanic" enough. Senator Patrick Leahy picked up this argument at the hearing, calling Estrada "the son of a prominent lawyer and a bank vice president" and a product of private schools, who "did not exactly share in the experiences of most Latinos." Estrada replied that his father was "a lawyer, not a prominent lawyer," and he'd gone to Catholic school. "I have never known what it means to be poor or rich or very rich," he continued. "I have been fortunate. . . . I have achieved a standard of living that I could not have achieved in my home country."

The Democrats pressed hard on ideology. The back-and-forth heated up when Schumer asked a carefully worded question lifted from a piece by Jack Newfield in the latest issue of the *Nation*: "Have you ever told anyone that you do not believe any person should clerk for Justice Kennedy because that person is too liberal, not conservative enough, or because that person did not have the appropriate ideology, politics, or judicial philosophy, or because you were concerned that person would influence Justice Kennedy to take positions you did not want him taking?" Estrada said no.

Republicans had a field day with another passage of the *Nation* piece, a quote from Schumer that "Estrada is like a Stealth missile—with a nose cone—coming out of the right wing's deepest silo." For a while, the hearing turned to other matters. Wisconsin's Russ Feingold threw in some questions about anti-loitering statutes in Chicago and racial profiling. Hatch argued for keeping the Department of Justice memos confidential. Herb Kohl asked the nominee about the commerce clause.

But then Senator Dianne Feinstein read from the *Nation* article. "Perhaps some of the most damaging evidence against Estrada," it said, "comes from two lawyers he interviewed for Supreme Court clerkships. Both were unwilling to be identified by name for

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fear of reprisals." According to Newfield's piece, one of the persons Estrada had interviewed believed that Estrada was giving him an "ideological litmus test"—"a lot of unfair, ideological questions, a lot about the death penalty, which I told him I thought was immoral." Newfield quoted the second person as saying, "Miguel told me that his job was to prevent liberal clerks from being hired. He told me he was screening out liberals because a liberal clerk had influenced Justice Kennedy to side with the majority and write a pro-gay-rights decision in a case known as *Romer* v. *Evans*."

"Did this happen?" asked Feinstein.

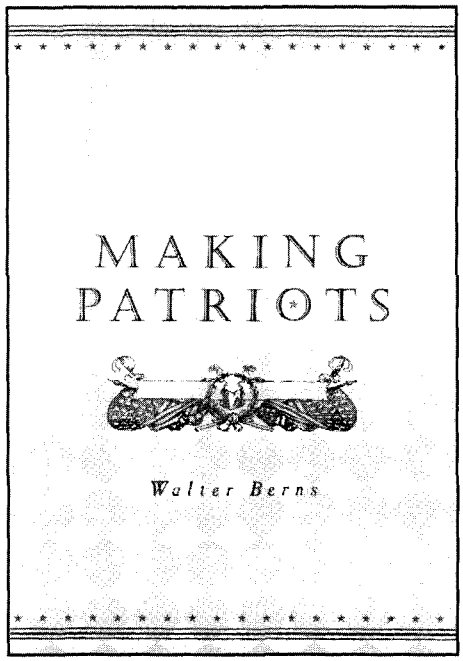
"Justice Kennedy picks his own clerks," Estrada answered. "If I said anything remotely on that subject, it would have been a joke."

But after lunch, Estrada decided to clarify his answer—perhaps he felt the blood was simmering again. Or perhaps it occurred to him that Schumer had been trying to trip him up. He qualified his remarks by stating that at some point he might have told Kennedy that an interviewee's views were too strong, ideologically or politically, and that the individual therefore could not function well as a clerk. "I don't know every conversation with every human being in my life," he said. "I have no idea who this person [in the *Nation*] could be. I have no idea of the circumstances."

Schumer pounced. "Are you retracting the 'No' you gave to me? . . . If so, I think we have some credibility problems here."

"Wait-a-second" was the look on Hatch's face, before he interjected, "This is really offensive." Then, turning to the nominee, "I don't want you bullied by the committee, and you don't have to take it."

This gave the senators something to wrangle over for much of the afternoon—when they weren't harping on the memos, which the Justice Department still declines to release. As the hearing meandered to an inconclusive adjournment, there was no end in sight for a confirmation battle that has lasted over 500 days. ♦



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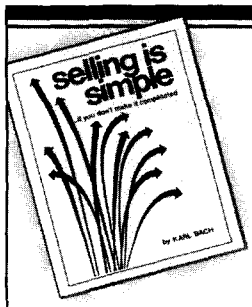

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CAIR-less with the Truth

The conspiratorial delusions of the Arab world find a voice in America. BY JAKE TAPPER

LESS THAN A WEEK after the September 11 terrorist attacks, President Bush visited the Islamic Center in Washington to make it clear that Islam and Muslims in general should not be held responsible. There he met with, among others, Nihad Awad, executive director of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), perhaps the most prominent Muslim advocacy group in the country.

These days, Awad and his organization are promoting an educational initiative to provide information about Islam to 16,000 libraries nationwide to combat anti-Muslim bigotry. One bit of information missing from CAIR's library project is the June 17, 2002, issue of the Egyptian newspaper *El-Osboa* (The Week). In a previously unnoticed interview conducted by Sanaa Al-Said, the executive director of CAIR says that Israel was responsible for the September 11 attacks. He goes on to say that he discussed this with President George W. Bush who, in Awad's version of events, allowed that this was a possibility. Perhaps needless to say, a White House official adamantly denies that such a conversation ever took place.

In the interview, Awad is asked if he believes the Mossad was responsible for the attacks on New York and Washington, to which he responds: "My belief is that the beneficiary is behind the attacks, and the biggest beneficiary from the September 11th events is certainly Israel." In an odd and convenient moment of ethnomodesty, Awad said that he told President Bush that Arabs in the Middle East had been suggesting that "what happened could not have been carried out by the hands of Muslims nor Arabs, due to the gravity and strength of planning and the efficiency of its execution."

What's more, Awad told *El-Osboa*, it was clear to him that no Muslim could have been responsible for the attacks because of "the big contradiction between what was said in the biographies of the suspects—that they were drinking alcohol and sleeping with women—and the behavioral biographies of bin Laden's group."

To that, President Bush is said to have told Awad that "the door is open for speculations and there might be a conspiracy behind the conspiracy. This means that if those that carried out the attack were Arabs, then non-Arabs and non-Muslims could be behind them."

A White House official calls Awad's tale of his conversation with the president absolutely "ridiculous." It simply "didn't happen," he said.

When asked about Awad's comments in *El-Osboa*, Ibrahim Hooper, CAIR's communications director, said he had never seen or heard of the interview but nonetheless declared it a "complete falsehood." Hooper was not able to explain how the lengthy interview came to appear in the Egyptian weekly. "You'd have to ask them to explain it," he said, going on to accuse me of conspiring with his enemies. Hooper later sent me an e-mail signed by Awad which read, "I was obviously misquoted in the *El-Osboa* article. It is my belief, and CAIR's position, that Osama bin Laden and his associates carried out the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon."

The Arab press is notoriously unreliable, of course. But the reporter who conducted the interview, Sanaa Al-Said, denies having misquoted Awad. "Of course not," she says. "I have it all on tape. This is nonsense." Al-Said said she is a long-established journalist who has conducted "interviews with presidents and kings. I'm not just a beginner."

Neither is Awad. He was an editor of the *Muslim World Monitor* in 1994 when that Dallas-based Palestinian paper published an unsigned editorial about the 1993 World Trade Center bombing: "There is ample evidence indicating that both the Mossad and the Egyptian Intelligence played a role in the explosion," the paper wrote—a quote that Awad has been accused of penning himself, though he has denied it.

Neither Hooper nor Awad would answer follow-up questions about whether they would be asking *El-Osboa* for a retraction or a correction of the "misquote." Three weeks after officials of CAIR were informed of the quotes—more than three months after it appeared in print—the editors of *El-Osboa* had yet to hear a demand for a correction, or a retraction, from officials of CAIR. In fact, it wasn't until this story was being prepared that editors of *El-Osboa* were even made aware of Awad's claim that he was misquoted. (The interview is posted in Arabic at *www.elosboa.co.uk/elosboa/issues/276/0700.asp.*)

CAIR underwent scrutiny after the September 11 attacks because of its leaders' past declarations of support for terrorist organizations like Hamas, and its initial reluctance to condemn Osama bin Laden. It was only on December 13, after the White House released the videotape featuring bin Laden reveling in his barbarism, that CAIR finally issued this statement: "For anyone who was not convinced of Osama bin Laden's complicity in the events of September 11, the content of this videotape should remove all doubt."

After CAIR's views on Hamas and bin Laden were first publicized in a piece I wrote for *Salon* in late Septem-

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ber 2001, other media organizations followed up and the White House discontinued contact with the organization. In November, the *Washington Post* reported that a White House source said that in its disputes with its critics over its support of, or at least refusal to criticize, various terrorists and terrorist causes, CAIR "lost the P.R. battle," and would no longer be invited to White House events.

If Awad did blame the 9/11 attacks on Israel, he was only reflecting a sentiment widespread in the Arab world. "I personally eliminate the possibility that Arab and Islamic organizations stood behind these acts," wrote Jordanian columnist Jihad Jabara in *Al-Rai*, on September 13, 2001, summing up a delusional theory that would only spread in the days and weeks after the attack: "Zionist organizations perpetrated it," Jabara said, "so that Israel could destroy the Al-Aqsa Mosque while the world was preoccupied with what happened in America."

On September 4, CBS's *60 Minutes II* interviewed Undersecretary of State Charlotte Beers for a segment on how Muslims worldwide overwhelmingly believe Jews were responsible for the 9/11 attack. Dan Rather asked Beers—responsible for improving the image of the United States abroad, particularly in the Arab world—how she would convince a Muslim that such a belief was ludicrous. "I would like to make available to you all the data and the information that we have," Beers replied. "Let me refer you to our website. Here's this booklet we just produced, which will help you follow the complete activities of the hijackers, their relationship to bin Laden. Let me show you the very words bin Laden himself has used to talk about his role."

But on that same website, the State Department also quotes Awad extensively. Perhaps Beers should call Awad and share that "data and information." Perhaps Awad should read it. And perhaps the State Department should quote someone besides Awad in its efforts to combat the delusions of the Arab world. ♦

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Will bloggers liberate the Middle East?

BY EVE TUSHNET

IRANIAN WOMEN can't dance in public, convert from Islam, travel without their husbands' permission, or wear makeup. But they can blog—that is, create weblogs, online journals of news, opinion, or whatever random thoughts tickle the blogger's fancy. And Iran's blogs are the leading edge of an inspiring trend in the Islamic world. They might even be able to lend a hand (indirectly) in the war effort.

According to the tech-and-culture magazine *Shift*, there are now more than 1,200 blogs in Persian. Iranian women are especially enthusiastic bloggers. *Shift* reports that one woman, going by the pseudonym "Lady Sun," sparked a debate about sex roles in Iran based on her discussion of a man who groped her while she was entering a taxi. One man used her "comments" feature to ask what she thought of *hijab*, the form of veiling required by Iranian law. Women readers described their frustration with men, and their sense of oppression; perhaps more surprisingly, one male reader confessed that he had not realized that the law requiring *hijab* "has had a negative impact on society."

One Iranian woman blogger told the BBC, "Women in Iran cannot speak out frankly because of our Eastern culture, and there are some taboos just for women, such as talking about sex or the right to choose your partner." But she, like Lady Sun, has heard from men who say her blog helped change their view of women in Iran.

Iran is one of the most blog-heavy Islamic countries, partly because Iran is leaping onto the Internet. (Government figures predict the wired population will grow from 400,000 to 15 million in the next three or four years, according to the BBC.) New sites like Blogger and Movable Type make blogging so easy that creating a website takes only minutes—even for people who think HTML is jabberwocky.

Blogging isn't coming to the poorest nations anytime soon. Afghanistan, for example, is one of the least wired societies on the planet. But there are bloggers almost everywhere else. (I even found one posting from Baghdad.) There are plenty of bloggers in Malaysia and the Philippines (where teen girls will post about their classroom crushes, and then note their fear of the Muslim terrorist group Abu Sayyaf). Fewer bloggers post from Central Asian republics like Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, but they are out there; the only Islamic countries where I found no bloggers were poverty-stricken Afghanistan and sternly repressive Saudi Arabia. Eatonweb, a site that lists blogs from around the world, managed to find one blog each from Pakistan, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and Western Sahara. There are many more sites that Eatonweb hasn't yet ferreted out (the "UAE Forever" site lists scores of blogs), and the numbers are only going to grow. As a popular Internet saying goes, "The Internet treats censorship like damage, and routes around it." What's more, the two-way form of communication that blogging facilitates lends the medium an air of cosmopolitanism, as Syrians link to Americans who link to Malaysians. One site, Blogiran, is run jointly by several expats and a woman currently living in Iran.

When bloggers in Islamic states

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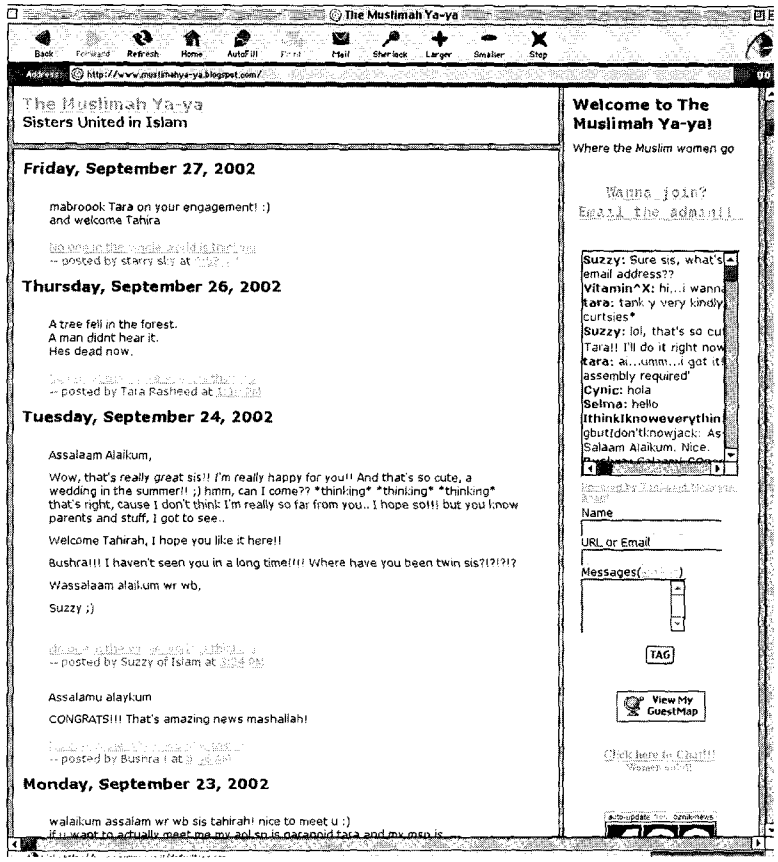
look at America, what do they see? Although some resent the global reach of American culture, far more (especially women) embrace aspects of our popular culture. Many bloggers expressed sympathy for Americans after 9/11. Bloggers in Islamic nations who are interested in politics will easily get the sense that Americans are not a political monolith, since political-commentary blogs tend to include lots of links to sites from opposing viewpoints.

But what I didn't find on these blogs was intense practical and theoretical discussion of freedom, virtue, or war. Consider how much our country has benefited from the Federalist Papers, for example, and the importance of an articulated understanding of political life becomes obvious.

Sites about Islam provide serious theoretical discussion of the teachings of Muhammad and their impact on political life. Blogs ranging from the you-go-girl coziness of Muslimah Ya-Ya (slogan: "the Muslim Ya-Ya Sisterhood") to the Enlightenment rationalism of MuslimPundit (slogan: "Going after starry pan-Islamic futurists with a rubber glove and a sharp stick") either provide or link to a wealth of in-depth religious and political commentary. These sites offer Islamic alternatives to the rage of bin Laden and the repression of the Saudi monarchs.

Such alternatives are crucially important, but they need to be matched with sites that do for political philosophy what the Islamic blogs do for religion. The middle class, the people who are reading and starting blogs, are essential to liberal reform. Because we are fighting not an army but an ideology—not one specific state or an open alliance, but a covert network and a tyrannical tendency—the United States has been talking in terms of "regime change" across an entire region. And as G.K. Chesterton put it, "You can never have a revolution in order to establish a democracy. You must have a democracy in order to have a revolution." Before a "regime change" (whether from without or, much better, from within) can succeed, there must be a core of people who have some of the habits of freedom, including experience with free expression, and at least a mild sympathy for America. Otherwise, "regime change" just replaces one master with another. Persuasion and cultural interpenetration—through foreign trade, through entrepreneurial-assistance groups, and definitely through the Internet—are a major part of the long-term struggle.



Website of the Muslim Ya-Ya Sisterhood

Ordinary American citizens are doing interesting things online to encourage the attitudes that promote liberal reform, and we could be doing even more. One possibility is simply to create websites where people can talk about their own understandings of, and appreciation for, liberal democracy. These sites should not be government-run: Government sites are likely to be stilted or propagandistic. Even more important, blogging's great strength is its grass-roots origin; it's about people creating something that they own and control. What better way to promote a desire for free expression and self-ownership than to do it ourselves?

Why not start a site where immigrants talk about what America means to them? Sites could also be dedicated to immigrants from specific countries—country-specific sites get lots of links, since people are naturally interested in what pertains to them most directly. Many bloggers are excited to find other bloggers in or from their own nation. Country-specific news and opinion sites, from a reformist perspective sympathetic to America, are also needed. Although there are some fun sites of this type by and for American immigrant communities (like *Iran Today*), there aren't many aimed at people still within Islamic nations.

Bloggers in Islamic countries are slowly building communities and changing people's minds about what is possible. That may not be as dramatic as an exploding cave, but it's equally necessary for long-term liberalization in the Middle East. ♦

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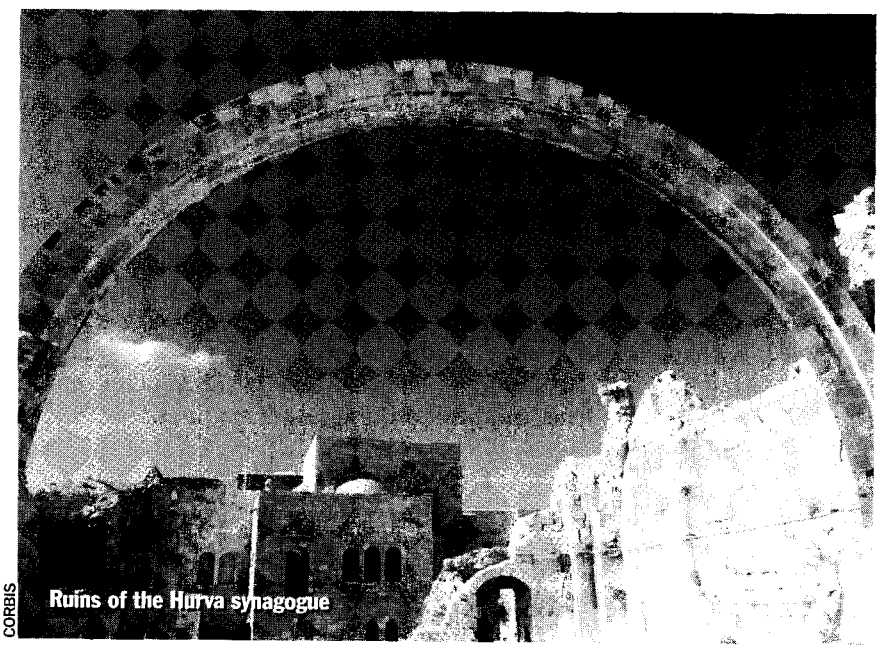
A New Synagogue in the Old City

Architecture matters.

BY DAVID GELERNTER



CORBIS

Ruins of the Hurva synagogue

ARCHITECTURE is politics by other means—at least some of the time. An emerging architectural story in Jerusalem is, in part, wonderful news; in part, a tragic missed opportunity.

Recently the *Jerusalem Post* ran a story on a project that is bound to attract plenty of attention before long: the rebuilding of the monumental Hurva synagogue in the Jewish Quarter of Old Jerusalem.

In 1948, when Israel declared independence, the Hurva was the main synagogue in the Jewish Quarter of the Old City. The Jordanians seized Old Jerusalem in '48, kicked out all the Jews, banned Israelis from entering even to visit or pray, desecrated Jewish cemeteries, vandalized Jewish buildings—and blew up the Hurva synagogue, just for the hell of it.

When the Israelis recovered Jerusalem in the Six Day War of '67, they rebuilt a single arch in the ruins of the Hurva, intending it as a temporary memorial. Now, at last, they have plans in hand to rebuild the synagogue itself.

Why should the world care? Jerusalem is full of domes; once upon a time, three domes (appropriately) stood out: the Muslim Dome of the Rock, the Christian Holy Sepulcher, the Hurva synagogue. Making decisions about Jerusalem is the exclusive right of Jerusalem residents and Israeli citizens, of all creeds. Butting in is everybody's right—Jerusalem is the quintessential world-city. Jews and Christians are especially entitled to butt in: Christians because the Gospels culminate here, Jews because they regard this city as the holiest on earth. ("Third holiest," which is how the city ranks with Muslims, is a respectable distinction as far as it goes; but when the topic is love, third place suggests a certain lack of ardor.)

Thus, cause for rejoicing: A gap is being filled in the skyline of one of the world's most important cities; ruins speaking of war and destruction are to be replaced by a reassertion of hope, peace, holiness.

So why are the Israelis treating this as such a low-key project? Not even the doviest elements of the Jewish community contemplate returning the Jewish Quarter to Arab occupation. But the *Post* quotes Professor Ronnie Ellenblum of Hebrew University, who asks: Why rebuild the Hurva? "Is it that Jerusalem needs another synagogue? No. It's just a message of power that says 'We are sovereign.'"

If an Israeli professor says so, when his countrymen merely want to rebuild a blown-up synagogue in the historically Jewish quarter of the historic (since the Early Iron Age) Jewish capital—what is a typical Sorbonne or Oxford or Berkeley professor likely to say?

On the other hand, who cares? The Israelis are missing a wonderful opportunity to speak to the world about Jewish Jerusalem.

Over the centuries a number of synagogues occupied the site, but the last one—the one the Jordanians destroyed—was built in 1864; the current plan is to rebuild this 19th-century synagogue verbatim. It was a dignified but unremarkable building. To copy it is pure tragic timidity. Jerusalemites want something with a dome that looks and feels like a synagogue—fair enough; Israel has more than its share of weird architectural mistakes. But a sufficiently good architect can meet any list of design constraints and still produce a distinguished building instead of a mere copy of a structure that isn't worth copying.

Is it possible for a monumental building to have a dome and be based on traditional local design motives,

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yet still be strikingly original and beautiful? Yes; I've just described Edwin Lutyens's famous Viceroy's Palace in New Delhi. The Jewish Quarter itself, largely rebuilt after 1967, is full of lovely new buildings that are traditional yet original—some by the eminent Israeli architect Moshe Safdie (although, for the Hurva synagogue assignment, there are designers I would prefer).

Why settle for mediocrity? More important, the new synagogue is an opportunity for Israel to speak to the world, and it would be crazy not to take the opportunity. There has rarely been such an outright *need* for an open, worldwide architectural competition. Why? To get the most beautiful building that can be gotten, of course—but that's only part of it. Equally important: The Hurva synagogue is the story of modern Israel in microcosm. An announcement of the competition, showing and explaining the site as it is today—the lone arch amid ruins—ought to be posted in every art and architecture school in the world, and in many other places too, everywhere. The poster could be an epoch in itself, if it were spare, vivid and strong, not sentimental, not defensive, with not too many words or colors but exactly the right ones. (Amber, deep terra cotta, and emerald green come to mind.)

The platform is ready, the mike is on, the tape is rolling; it is time to step up and speak. Also required: an eminent international panel to judge the competition. Invite the king of Jordan and the president of Egypt to join it. (Fat chance—but why not ask, and put the propaganda champions on the defensive for once?) Send an international exhibit of the design submissions around the world.

Yes of course: Most of the world will be too bigoted to look and listen. But that's no excuse not to show and tell. Telling the world things it doesn't want to hear is one of Israel's oldest, noblest traditions. The project falls under Natan Sharansky's authority; he is minister of housing and construction, and as good a man as any to point out that bombs can only rip up a nation's body, not its spirit.

In the long run, the Knesset (whose current building looks like a parking garage in Mineola) is no doubt fated to move to the Jewish Quarter too, to look out across the plaza that fronts the Western Wall. That move poses deep problems, and won't happen for a long time; but since we're holding an architectural competition anyway, why not ask for designs and have a look? Architecture is one of a nation's most important ways of speaking. Too often Israel sounds (is forced to sound) angry and defiant. But the right kind of architectural speaking can make it sound like what it is, the proud patron and loving, dutiful guardian of one of the world's greatest treasures. ♦

Michael Ramirez

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The Angry Adolescent of Europe

Irresponsibility as the German way.

By Christopher Caldwell

Berlin

German chancellor Gerhard Schröder has been getting help from the heavens lately. On the last Saturday of the tightest election campaign in the history of democratic Germany, Schröder chose the Baltic port of Rostock as the backdrop for his closing speech. The idea was to advertise his empathy for the former East German lands by showing off Rostock's expensively restored town square. And indeed, the place is as pretty as any coastal city in Holland. But pounding rainstorms were predicted for the whole day, driving indoors all but a few hundred hard-core party members and several beer-can-clutching malcontents, in their color-coordinated East European soccer-drunk sweat suits, who had come to howl about how little they liked being unemployed. It was a reminder that the jobless rate in this bleak region of warehouses and crabgrass is still near 20 percent, and that Rostock, like all other small cities in the east, continues to hemorrhage population. But seven minutes before Schröder was due to climb onstage, the rain stopped and the clouds parted. By the time he appeared, the barriers were mobbed by clapping people and sunlight was streaming into the main square.

Schröder's first term was like that. When he entered office in 1998, he was hailed as Germany's answer to Tony Blair and Bill Clinton. Schröder was the man who would put an end to both his party's socialist cant and his country's scourge of chronic, double-digit unemployment. The jobless tally stood at 4 million then, and Schröder told crowds that if he couldn't get it under 3.5 million he wouldn't deserve to be reelected. Voters took him at his word. Every poll taken since 1993 has ranked unemployment as the country's number-one problem—and it has proved too much for Schröder to handle, soaring this year to a record high of 4.3 million (in a shrinking workforce). Germany still has the highest nominal taxes in Europe, and it has been pummeled by the dot-com collapse—despite not having benefited from the dot-com boom. Tax revenues are through the floor. Financing for the government's trillion-dollar investment in prettying up places like Rostock now looks precarious, and the improvements like Potemkin ones. Formerly a model of fiscal discipline, Germany may soon get a "blue letter" from the European Union, warning it that its budget deficits have overshot the 3 percent upper limit (agreed to by E.U. member countries at Germany's—a bygone Germany's—insistence). Schröder avoided this sanction by withholding crucial federal budget statistics until after the elections. His own government predicts a growth rate under 1 percent this year, and non-government prognosticators call that estimate too rosy. The country's health system is overgenerous and overburdened. Its retirement system, which kicks in at an unofficial age of 57 or 58, is reaching the point of actuarial absurdity. Watching Gerhard Schröder strut behind a rostrum or joke in a television studio, one is pulled up short to remember that the "brash young chancellor" is 59—an age when the solid majority of his countrymen are collecting pensions.

All year long, Schröder had been running behind his challenger, Bavarian governor Edmund Stoiber of the Christian Social Union (CSU), local sister party to the national Christian Democratic Union (CDU). Stoiber had combined his region's Catholic conservatism with tax breaks for business in a kind of right-wing socialism that came to be called the "laptops-and-lederhosen" model. It seemed to work. Immigration was limited in Bavaria, but anti-immigrant violence was lower than elsewhere in Germany. Businesses were moving in, but the state environmental laws were among the country's toughest. Most important, the unemployment rate in Bavaria—5 percent—was at or below American levels. Stoiber promised to cut taxes nationwide and to do for Germany what he had done for his home state. The writing was on the wall for Schröder.

Stoiber is a Catholic with a big family, a tranquil home life, and a mind like a steel trap; Schröder is a hard-drink-

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ing, cigar-sucking playboy who brags about never reading books, and has had four wives, most recently the kittenish tabloid reporter Doris Köpf. (Hence the CDU's popular bumper sticker: "Three ex-wives can't be wrong.") Germans were almost unanimous in saying that Schröder was the guy they'd rather drink a beer with. The election was turning into a battle between "competence" and "personality"—a battle, strangely enough, that both sides welcomed. But competence had the upper hand. In spring elections in the state of Sachsen-Anhalt, Schröder's party had lost half its votes, and this was the national trend. By mid-July, half of Schröder's 1998 voters said they would hesitate to vote for him again. Then came the flood.

The Elbe river runs through the most expensively restored landmarks and infrastructure in the former East Germany. When it overran its banks after days of heavy rain in midsummer, it destroyed tens of billions of euros worth of new buildings, along with vast tracts of farmland. It was then that Schröder showed he *is* the German Bill Clinton—at least in his mastery of leadership theatrics. Like Clinton after the Oklahoma City bombing, he addressed the nation. He flew to Saxony and spent days with the flooded-out inhabitants. Then he rushed back to Berlin to put on hold a business tax cut (which he had never much liked anyway) in order to fund a 150-billion euro East German rebuilding program through the year 2019. Stoiber flew to Saxony, too. But after a couple of hours' talking with local politicians, he went back on vacation. Schröder was suddenly "relevant" again. His environmentalist coalition partners in the Green party were also set to capitalize, since three-quarters of Germans believed the floods were due to global climate change. Something was changing in the German population, as well: 200 million euros in individual donations poured in to help the flood victims. "It showed solidarity," said Schröder's campaign manager Matthias Machnig. "We had been reunified for a while, but only officially. It was somehow not in the heart."

And with the eyes of his newly patriotic countrymen upon him, Schröder embarked on the gamble that would win him the election. He launched an all-out political attack on the United States, calling into question an alliance that has defined Germany to the world for the last 54 years. He tried to exploit an anti-Americanism he assumed was latent in German public opinion. Where it was not latent, he sought to create it.

Schröder has never been comfortable with the terms of the postwar alliance that bound Germany's fate to the other Western powers. His father, whose picture sits on his desk in the chancellery, was killed fighting with the Wehrmacht in Romania when Schröder was three days old. So Schröder's mother made ends meet by laboring as a menial in British military installations. The working-out of Germany's guilt in World War II is something that has never interested him—he believes, with reason, that he has already paid dearly for World War II himself. As a young member of parliament in the early 1980s, he preferred relations with Moscow to relations with Washington. He opposed the Kohl-approved Holocaust memorial that is now being built in the center of Berlin. At a time when the average German busboy can get the gist of *Seinfeld* on television, he speaks no English at all.

Schröder's attack on America was pieced together out of several talking points. The first was a complaint that President Bush had not dealt with Germany *in Augenhöhe*—on an equal basis. With justice, he complained that getting a call from Washington two hours before to say "We're going in" does not constitute "consultation." He said that "the existential questions of German foreign policy will be decided in Berlin—and only in Berlin." Most incendiary was his invocation of a Bismarckian *deutscher Weg*, a "German way"—presumably a better way—in foreign policy. And as the elections drew near, he and his campaign blamed the speech of Vice President Cheney on August 28, which justified preemptive action against Saddam Hussein, for having provoked him to respond.

Taken as a whole, Schröder's position was held together by no logic. If America was now such a menace to world peace, why had Schröder pledged his "unconditional solidarity" to the United States in the days after September 11? Why, in fact, had Schröder risked a no-confidence vote in order to send German troops to Afghanistan? If an okay from the United Nations was of the essence, then why had Schröder chosen NATO's Kosovo operation, which had no U.N. sanction, as the occasion of Germany's first participation in a military attack since World War II? If unilateralism was such a problem, why was he insisting that all Germany's decisions be made in Berlin? How could he blame Cheney's August 28 speech for sparking German reluctance when Schröder had given his own "*deutscher Weg*" speech on August 5? And who had asked Germany to participate in an Iraq operation anyway?

It took a while for even Schröder's allies to see what he was doing. Hans-Ulrich Klose, a fellow socialist who chairs the Bundestag's foreign policy committee, warned that Saddam was a genuine menace. At the same time Schröder and his ministers were calling for "unambiguous" information about Iraq's chemical weapons program, *Bild* (the tabloid that had employed Schröder's wife) ran an article crediting Germany's intelligence services as the source of information that Baghdad had developed new, long-range missile capability. Saddam, Klose warned, would never leave without a "threat scenario" of the sort the Americans

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were developing. Angelika Beer, a defense adviser to the Green foreign minister Joschka Fischer, said, "Pretty much the only thing we can offer [in an Iraq war] is AWACS surveillance, and Schröder hasn't mentioned that." Foreign policy experts were trying to fit Schröder's move into a general German foreign policy strategy and couldn't.

It underestimates the boldness of Schröder to say merely that Germany is a country of pacifists who can be moved by any Machiavellian. Granted, the pacifism is there: In a December 1990 poll, just after reunification, two-thirds of Germans said their big, new country should have a foreign policy like Switzerland's. And Stoiber feared this pacifism enough to follow meekly behind Schröder, even saying in his desperate last days that he would "definitely not" allow the United States to use bases in Germany for any unilateral attack. (Social Democratic Party [SPD] experts quickly noted that, since these were NATO bases, Germany did not have that right.) But in Kosovo, Schröder and Fischer had shattered Germans' reservations about armed intervention. (This, indeed, will be the most important legacy of the Kosovo conflict.) Post-1999, Germans are actually conflicted about war in general, and about Iraq in particular. One poll had 50 percent saying "No" to any invasion, 45 percent saying "Yes" to a U.N. operation, and 4 percent saying "Yes" to any kind of operation. Another poll asked simply whether Germany should take part in a U.N. operation against Iraq—and the answer was "Yes" for 61 percent. Schröder's move, that is, was not guaranteed to work for mass consumption. It was meant to mobilize his base. He didn't want to follow the example of French prime-ministerial loser Lionel Jospin, and get left behind by a hard-line wing of his party that is being radicalized by questions of globalization.

And he didn't. Not only did Schröder suddenly rise rapidly in the polls; the anti-globalist international left hailed him as a conquering hero. Britain's *Guardian* ran a North Korean-style tribute headlined "Ordinary Joe has voters eating from his hand," and on election night, all the Arabic-language stations available on my hotel TV led with celebrations of Schröder's victory. Both Schröder and his advisers began to get drunk with their new role. The SPD parliamentary leader Ludwig Stiegler compared George W. Bush to Julius Caesar and U.S. ambassador Dan Coats to Pyotr Abrassimow, the arrogant and ruthless Soviet ambassador to East Germany in the years before the Berlin Wall fell. And then, four days before the election, Schröder's justice minister Herta Däubler-Gmelin compared Bush to Adolf Hitler.

Däubler had been having quite a lot of fun with the Americans that week. The Saturday before, her American counterpart John Ashcroft had traveled to Denmark to ask for German assistance in the case of two al Qaeda operatives, the Frenchman Zacarias Moussaoui (who had gone to Germany to meet with plot organizers) and the Yemenite Ramsi bin al-Shibh (who had lived in Germany as hijacker Mohamed Atta's roommate). Däubler read Ashcroft the riot act. She refused outright to share any evidence until she got assurances it would not be used in a case that could lead to Moussaoui's execution.

Däubler's Hitler incident was *not* a he-said/she-said matter that may involve only an appearance of impropriety. There is almost word-for-word consensus about what she said to the trade union activists who were present at the conclave where she said it. Däubler said: "Bush wants to divert attention from his domestic political troubles. This is a favorite tactic. We know that from our own history since Adolf Nazi" [sic]. The most arresting thing in the quote is not its comparison of Hitler and Bush, which reflects only her own ideological extremism. It is Däubler's *Opa war kein Nazi!* attitude, which betrays either disingenuousness or ignorance of her own country's history. Hitler, of course, had worked out his war aims by the time he wrote *Mein Kampf*, a decade before he came to power. And whatever his domestic failures, he had none that were perceived as such by his adoring subjects; as he dispatched the Wehrmacht across Europe, Hitler was the most beloved leader in German history.

Däubler complicated matters further by first denying she'd made the comparison at all, then calling the editors of the *Schwäbische Tagblatt* to tell them, "I didn't compare the persons Hitler and Bush, only their methods." Here she opened a window into the moral world of the German left. Most people would say that Hitler's methods were the *worst* thing about him. Yet Däubler believes that we should be more repelled by

Illustration by Gary Locke

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some kind of evil *essence* in Hitler than by anything he *did*. In Däubler's mind, some people are repositories of 100-percent goodness and others of 100-percent badness. There are people like her, and there are people like Adolf Hitler. It was, in retrospect, a dangerous thing to install such a person at the head of a democratic justice system.

Däubler had been one of the few high-ranking socialists to support Schröder back in the early 1990s, when he was a small fry battling for preeminence against party heavyweights. She differed with him only on matters of high principle. With her close ties to Germany's Protestant church, Däubler opposed cloning and most gene research, while Schröder has promoted a less regulated biotech industry that he hopes will turn Germany into the Silicon Valley of gene technology. But for all Däubler's loyalty, her rantings provided a trove of material for weeks' worth of psychoanalysis of the German temperament, and Schröder was not in the mood for that. Literally a minute after the polls closed on Sunday, he announced that she would "under no circumstances" serve in his next cabinet.

Schröder's anti-Americanism was foredoomed to get out of control. Whatever pacifist impulses it may have drawn on, it was primarily an expression of German nationalism. Schröder likes the position of being Europe's hard guy against the United States: On his first visit to Washington after the election of President Bush, he delivered a harsh letter from the E.U. warning the president that America could not hold itself aloof from the Kyoto Protocol on global climate change. From the United States, Schröder's actions may appear to be a "European" thing: Jealous of American unity and decisiveness, which they cannot imitate, Europeans have sought to impose their own bickering disunity—their any-crank-has-a-veto system—on us. But that would be wrong. In fact, Schröder is wallowing in the very worldview that Europe is being constructed to prevent. The campaign was nationalist from the start. Last winter and early spring, Schröder sought to scapegoat foreign bureaucrats in Brussels for his economic problems. He discarded this strategy only because it didn't work.

What makes it clearest that Schröder's position involves nationalism rather than Europeanism is that it has panicked France, and sent French politicians of *all* parties into a rage. For years, the Franco-German relationship—and hence the European Union—was built on an informal agreement: absolute equality in European institutions and a right to consultation on anything the other partner did. In French eyes, Germany has broken this deal three times: First (and probably unavoidably), when Helmut Kohl proposed German unity without seeking President Mitterrand's permission; second, when Schröder cold-cocked President Jacques Chirac at the E.U.'s Nice summit in 2000, asking (by virtue of the unified Germany's larger population) for surplus representation on European bodies; and third, the present ugliness. Schröder's use of Iraq to humble America had the side-effect of breaking up Europe's common defense policy. Germany may not be conscious of what a sacrifice George Bush made in asking the United Nations to okay an Iraq threat, but France is. Chirac even views Bush's U.N. speech as a giant diplomatic achievement for Europe, since he and Tony Blair had urged it. Viewed in this light, Schröder's freelancing divides Europe, leaving the continent weaker, not stronger, against American influence.

A favorite Schröder theme throughout his four years in office has been that Germany must once more become "a normal country." His campaign slogan this time around was: *Für ein modernes Deutschland*. Ask yourself what other leader of an advanced Western country would speak of an aspiration to be modern, and it becomes clear that what "modern" means is free of hang-ups over World War II, in the same way that some people (not very admirable ones, to be sure) use "mature" as a synonym for "without guilt." Germans are losing their awkwardness about mentioning the Nazi era. Just before he retired from the Bundestag in early September, former chancellor Helmut Kohl was overheard in the cafeteria describing the socialist Wolfgang Thierse as "the worst Bundestag president since Göring." One big Berlin chain of shoe shops now has a sign outside its stores reading: *Budapester Schühe. Qualität mit Tradition seit 1939.*

But it is Schröder who feels this need to move on more passionately than any other German politician, even if he tends to express it only in cryptic metaphors. One bizarre flight of oratory in his Rostock speech puzzled many who heard it. Speaking of the flood damage in eastern Germany, he suddenly grew solemn and hectoring, and insisted that the bill for it be paid right now. "A disaster that happens in this generation," he said, "should be handled by this generation. We shouldn't lay it on the shoulders of our children and grandchildren." What made this bizarre, and almost certainly metaphorical, is that Schröder is not known to believe in paying for *anything* right now.

A good case can be made that constant looking backwards has deprived Germany of both optimism and dynamism. The locking of the country's politics into atonement for World War II, necessary though it was for many decades, deserves some of the blame for the adolescent, consumerist, hedonistic, pornographic society that Germany has turned into. A good case can also be made for declaring an end to Germany's legal liability for its sins. Useful though it might have been to Alfonse D'Amato's reelection efforts, sending out some American lawyer born in 1974 to seek Holocaust-era damages so steep that they

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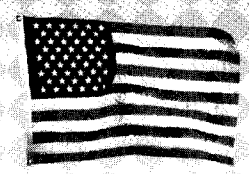
threaten the job of a German machine worker born in 1977 leaves Germans with the feeling that atonement is impossible in other countries' eyes, and is therefore pointless. Banging contemporary Germans on the head with their grandparents' crimes is unlikely to turn the country into a more moderate, more tolerant place.

But Schröder and his allies have been seeking to get over the past in ways that are disingenuous and obsessive. They're not "normal" at all. His defense minister Peter Struck, for instance, launched a "Soldiers for Schröder" organization over the summer—a straightforward violation of German laws prohibiting politicization of the country's military. In dealing with the past, the Schröder government is trying to claim the best of both worlds. For the purposes of moral preening, they're neutrals, because pacifist; for the purposes of ducking out of the fight to defend the free world against a tyrant, they're disabled, because formerly Nazi. It's almost as if Schröder and his allies are dredging the German past up so that *they* can beat *other countries* over the head with it. World War II and the Holocaust thus become a source of expertise, and even haughtiness: *The United States doesn't think it's acting like a fascistic country, but that's only because it doesn't know any better. We do! We're the fascist experts!*

Germany's defection from the Western alliance was of little military importance. The country's potential contribution to an attack on Iraq consists of AWACS planes, a handful of medical units, and exactly six tanks, now stationed in Kuwait, that can monitor biological and chemical weapons. The real point of this démarche was (to take a page from Ms. Däubler-Gmelin) to distract Germans from domestic difficulties by refocusing attention abroad. Poor Edmund Stoiber vainly stressed this. "No matter who is chancellor," he said, "this winter, there is not going to be a single soldier of the Bundeswehr in Iraq. But there are going to be 4.3 million unemployed in Germany. That's the real danger that confronts us."

For political purposes, all of Germany's problems disappeared beneath discussions of Iraq, but that didn't make them go away. Forty thousand German businesses are expected to go bankrupt this year, far and away a record. A particularly big one, MobilCom, with 5,500 employees,



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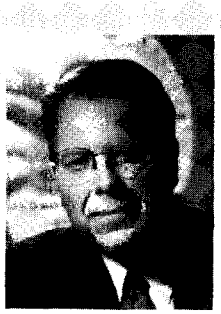
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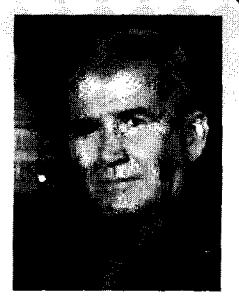
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threatened to go under two weeks before the election. A subsidiary of the French government-owned France Télécom, MobilCom (in a story that will be familiar to Americans) paid way too much for rights in Germany's spectrum auction, and lost its shirt. Schröder's instinct was to spend 400 million euros of government money to bail the company out. This is what he had done as governor of Lower Saxony when, in 1998, the local Preussag steelworks threatened to lay off thousands of workers and move its plant abroad on the eve of Schröder's run for chancellor. Back then, Schröder bullied the government-dependent Norddeutsche Landesbank into ponying up a billion dollars in aid, prompting accusations that he had bought the chancellor's office with tax money. He did the same thing with the Philipp Holzmann building company three years ago, stalling a shutdown with a federal cash infusion. But this time the strategy flopped—all that money was lost when the company went bankrupt months later.

Schröder called MobilCom "a healthy enterprise at its core." But it wasn't, and the bailout disadvantaged dozens of other high-tech companies in Germany and elsewhere, in a way that Europe's increasingly punctilious competition authorities would never approve. So Schröder's only hope was that France could be browbeaten into having its high-tech industry throw good money after bad. The Schröder view was that French capitalists should fulfill their *Schutzpflicht*, their duty to protect workers. The French view was that Schröder was asking French taxpayers to subsidize the German unemployment system. Given the Schröder-Chirac rift over Iraq, this was not going to happen.

Stoiber could not make hay out of any of these bailouts, since he himself had been involved in the most spectacular such flop of recent years: the bankruptcy of the Kirch media empire, whose pie-in-the-sky expansion plans fell apart after the company had received 1.9 billion euros in unsecured loans from the Bavarian state. But he did accuse Schröder of wheeling and dealing with CEOs while small business (where 70 percent of German jobs are created) suffers. Most notorious, at the horribly mismanaged Deutsche Telekom, shares sank 90 percent while the board of directors' salaries rose 90 percent and a Schröder industrial protégé, CEO Ron Sommer, received a gargantuan buyout. Stoiber tarred the chancellor as *der Genoße der Bosse* ("the bosses' pal"), and the name stuck.

It was to a boss that Schröder finally turned to get himself out of the unemployment pickle. His crony Peter Hartz, a director of Volkswagen, which is the largest business in Schröder's Lower Saxony, had been deputized last winter to lead a commission investigating a scandal in Germany's national employment agency. The agency had systematically exaggerated the number of Germans it had been able to find jobs for. Into the bargain, Hartz came up with an ambitious employment plan that he and Schröder leaked to the newsmagazine *Der Spiegel* in late June. Its high points were a government-run temp agency and incentives (read: subsidies) for small business to make new hires. The magazine presented it as the chancellor's economic *Wunderwaffe*—no one knew quite how it would work, but it was supposed to cut unemployment in half by 2005.

Schröder was able to campaign on the plan, even as he undercut it. He insisted that the government-sponsored temps get the prevailing (exorbitant) union wage, which would, of course, make them just as unhirable as private sector temps are now. He attacked the idea of a *Hire-und-Fire-Gesellschaft*, which is the new German word for "labor market," and to which the Hartz report makes a grudging accommodation. By the end of the campaign, there was nothing left of Hartz's recommendations that Schröder would claim for his own—except, of course, the promise to cut the jobless rate. In its place was a howling and envy-laced populism that sought to blame declining services on the people who still had jobs. On the sunlit stage in Rostock, Schröder insisted that health care "shouldn't be only for those who are born with a silver spoon in their mouths." Education, meanwhile, "shouldn't depend on how much money is in Mummy and Daddy's wallet."

It is difficult to say how much of this populist envy has found its way into Schröder's policy towards the United States. In a clear-sighted editorial, Thomas Schmid of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* wrote that Schröder surely knows the awful impulses he is stoking:

> Schröder has gained himself a dark alliance: "National conservatives" (who have long been disappointed in the Christian Democrats) will approve, as will many citizens in eastern Germany, where the GDR regime's anti-Western and anti-democratic propaganda have not been without lasting influence. The peace protesters of the 1980s, desperate to avoid coming to terms with the wreckage of their efforts, see themselves as vindicated, as do the new, young peace activists, who have only now discovered the emotions of peace rhetoric. It is a national coalition of those for whom the battles over German history have been definitively worked out.

The tortured examinations of conscience that marked West Germany in the decades after the war, those soul-searching reflections of "working through the past," were genuine, and they grew a country of honor and decency out of a moral disaster. Unfortunately, West Germany is a country that no longer exists. The worries that, after reunification, the west would crush the new eastern states into

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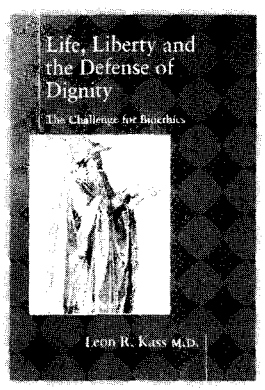
some kind of conformism has turned out to be 180 degrees wrong. The states of the old West Germany turn out to be relatively frozen in their political allegiances; the East is wide open, and it is to the swing voters of the former Soviet bloc that successful politicians now address themselves. The Stalinist government of East Germany taught its citizens that *they* were the victims of fascism. To the extent that they were doomed to spend their lives under communism while their Western cousins lived it up, this turned out to be true, in a sense. Easterners feel the very opposite of historical guilt. They feel historical entitlement. Even as their incomes have doubled in relation to westerners' since the fall of the wall, they feel they've been wronged, dissed, screwed. Never denazified, historically frozen by decades of Soviet occupation, the east is something of a museum of German character. It is the easterners who provided the target audience for Schröder's anti-American message.

Political scientists used to say that the CDU and CSU had a "structural majority" in Germany. This meant that, barring any dramatic irregularities, conservatives won elections. Indeed, had the election been limited to the western states, Schröder's coalition would have been thrown out of office. But with reunification and the moving of the capital to Berlin, Germany has lurched back into Central Europe. It has also inherited some of the region's problems. Its population is collapsing, and its welfare state may collapse along with it. Its economy shows no signs of entrepreneurship and innovation. Its young people seem motivated by consumerism alone, and are disinclined to form families. Germans tend to be optimistic about solving these problems; as Jochen Thiese, a journalist for Deutschland Radio, notes: "We Germans wait until the last second before moving." And good if they do, but why does everyone assume that these problems will eventually be solved?

It is possible that Germany is undergoing a deep cultural change, and also beginning a slow economic spiral down to a standard of living below that of its neighbors. One can also wonder about its role in the world. The anti-American messages with which Schröder wooed his newly Central European country may subside, and there may be a period of calm ahead for the German-American alliance. But why assume that Schröder's distrust of America—and the West?—is a temporary rather than a heartfelt thing? Perhaps it is—but even if it is, something has changed. Should Germany's economic problems prove insoluble, should relations sour with its European neighbors, the United States has now been established as Germany's scapegoat of first resort. ♦

Life, Liberty and the Defense of Dignity
The Challenge for Bioethics
By Leon R. Kass



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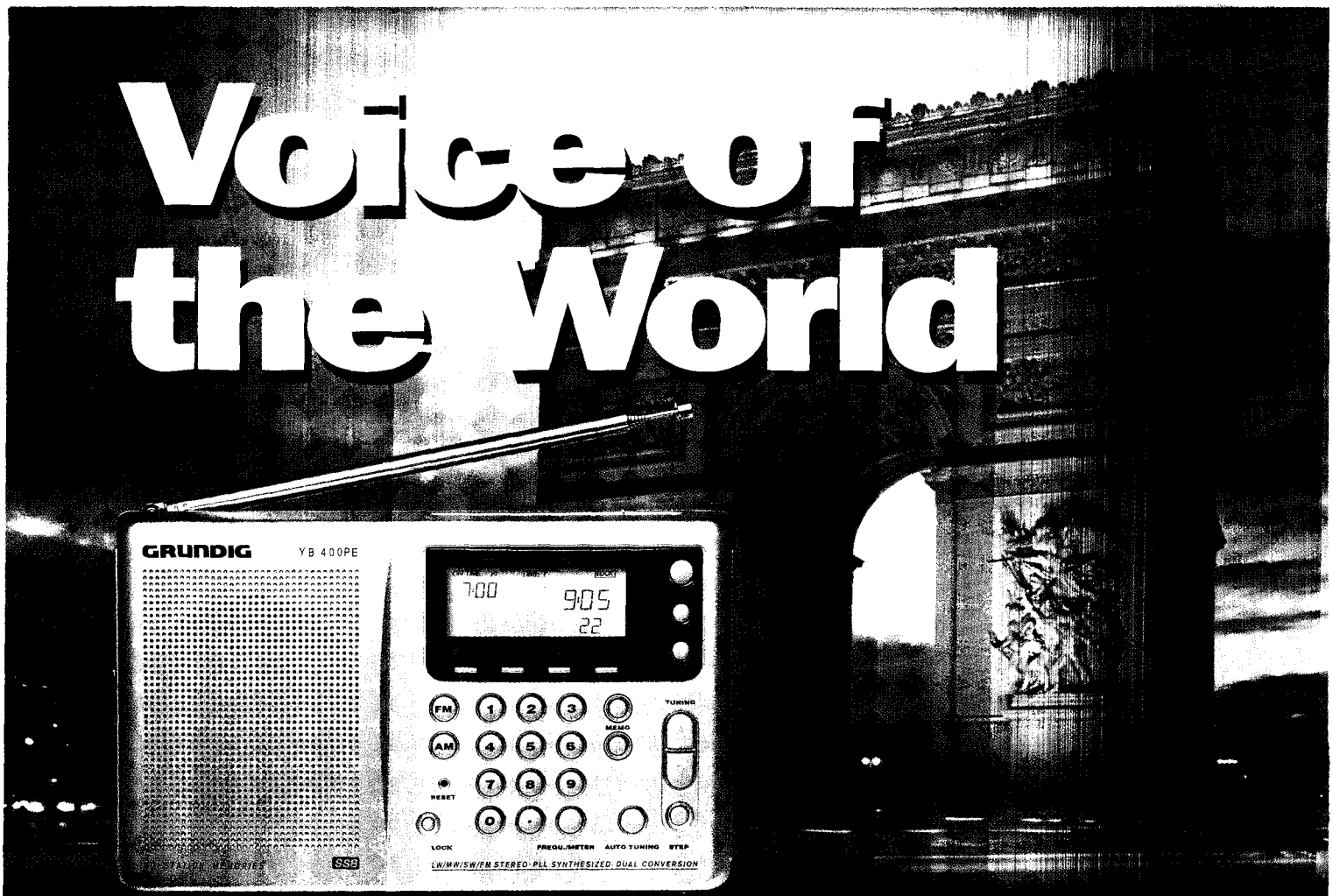

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The Real Tom Stoppard

Our greatest comic playwright

By JONATHAN LEAF

Tom Stoppard. All photos: Palgrave Macmillan.

To write one brilliant and very funny play is an accomplishment. To write two or three, as Oscar Wilde did, is extraordinary. To write five or six, as George Bernard Shaw did, is prodigious.

So think what that says about Tom Stoppard, who has written eight: *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, *The Real Inspector Hound*, *Jumpers*, *Night and Day*, *The Real Thing*, *On the Razzle*, *Arcadia*, and *The Invention of Love*. Stoppard has never—as he acknowledges—had a talent much suited to the creation of plots, nor has he ever been inclined to render characters who speak much differently from one another. But as a serious dramatist he has gradually developed and now, at age sixty-five, he surpasses Arthur Miller and Harold Pinter as our premier living writer of dramas. And, more to the point, he has climbed past Congreve, Wilde, and Shaw to become the most outstanding comic playwright in the history of the English language.

Not that he has lacked for recognition along the way. In the thirty-five years since *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* first appeared, he has remained a star. In recent years, he has won an Academy Award, become the only playwright ever to have two shows running simultaneously at Lincoln Center, been the only living playwright not writing in French to have his work performed at the Comédie-Française, received a knighthood, and has been the subject of innumerable studies and biographies—the latest of which is Ira Nadel's massive *Tom Stoppard: A Life*.

Tom Stoppard
A Life
by Ira Bruce Nadel
Palgrave Macmillan, 384 pp., $29.95

The Nadel biography does a good job of giving us facts about Stoppard: born in Czechoslovakia in 1937 as Tomas Straussler, family forced to flee because of their Jewish ancestry, father's death on a ship bombed by the Japanese, mother's remarriage to a British major in India, rearing in England. Nadel makes a few small mistakes (misspelling the names of the director Fred Schepisi and Princeton's McCarter Theater, attributing a famous remark of Rossini's to Verdi). But he is generally thorough—indeed, at times, wearisomely so. The book is not only exhaustive, but frequently exhausting, filled with digressions about the intellectual life of Jews in nineteenth-century Czech lands, recurrent mentions of a Stoppard letter to a former Czech president, and Stoppard's friendships with celebrities.

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Nadel interrupts his discussion of *Arcadia*, for instance, to mention that "on his return to London, he went to see Pinter's *Moonlight*; two days later, on 28 October, he and Felicity Kendal attended an event at Buckingham Palace and the next day he was off to Auckland, New Zealand and then Australia for the opening of several of his plays and to lecture. On his return he lunched with the Prince of Wales and John Cleese on the same day. The year ended with a party at the Jaggers'."

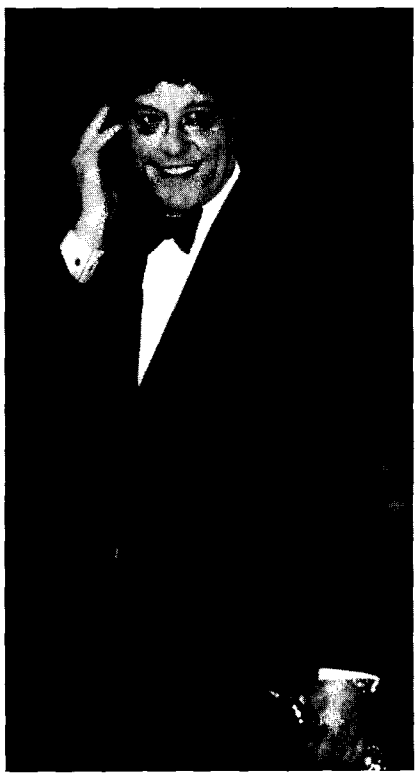
There is, of course, an irony in the appearance of a meticulous, heavily footnoted, fact-filled biography of Stoppard—a playwright who has often insisted that literal accounts of necessity tend to miss the underlying truths that fictional depictions uncover. Still, Nadel, an energetic, facile Canadian who has also published a well-received biography of the singer-songwriter Leonard Cohen, has written what will surely be the standard account for some years to come.

Regarding Stoppard's plays, Nadel is far better at recounting the reaction to them and explaining their often abstruse themes than he is at gauging or commenting upon their significance. It eludes him, for instance, that Stoppard's *Travesties* is overrated and itself, arguably, a travesty, or that the much-criticized *Night and Day* is among the best plays of the last half century. Stoppard's biographer also spends little time discussing perhaps the most interesting aspect of Stoppard's work: its development since *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*.

Nadel mentions several times that a poll rated the play the seventh best English-language drama of the twentieth century. *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* is so overflowing with wit that it easily and deservedly established Stoppard's reputation in one flash at its Old Vic premiere in 1967. But Nadel does not make the point that, for all its *éclat*, the play has dated badly. The camp elements that so appealed to 1960s audiences are weaknesses, and its lead parts lack the tragic dimension and grandeur of later Stoppard roles.

Nadel makes only an oblique reference (through a quotation from the actor Richard Dreyfuss about Stoppard's contribution to the screenplay for *Shakespeare in Love*) to the question of how important a writer's work is when the bulk of it has a limited audience. But perhaps this challenge to Stoppard's reputation is a false one. His work is popular with the masses.

Indeed, it's not unlikely that more people around the world have seen and



appreciated Stoppard's work than, say, Neil Simon's—for Simon has had consistent popular success in the theater and much-less consistent success at the movies (think of *Max Dugan Returns* or *Only When I Laugh*), while for Stoppard, the opposite is true. Stoppard has reached vast audiences with his scripts for such films as *Empire of the Sun*, *Brazil*, *Shakespeare in Love*, *The Russia House*, and for uncredited work on widely seen movies like *Schindler's List*. At the same time he has never been afraid to work on projects with limited appeal, spending large amounts of time on plays for little-known avant-garde theater troupes and occupying several years in the 1990s writing a BBC radio play. (And when was the last time you listened to one of those?) Nor has he hesitated to write dramas that demand such sizeable casts or complex sets that they cannot be performed except as special events.

A somewhat ill-at-ease supporter of Margaret Thatcher and close friend of Paul Johnson, Stoppard first showed his hostility to liberal shibboleths and left-wing cant in 1978 with what may still be his best drama: *Night and Day*. A commercial hit in London when it premiered with Diana Rigg, the play depicted a day in the life of an English family in a fictitious African country that bore an intentional likeness to Idi Amin's Uganda.

By creating an obnoxious and unscrupulous leftist journalist named Richard "Dick" Wagner who plays a role in the death of an idealistic young Tory journalist, Stoppard made transparent his dislike of the dregs of Fleet Street and the unions exploiting the newspapers. He also exposed his frank contempt for the concept of revolutionary truth and the implicit kinship that exists between totalitarianism and reporters of the Alexander Cockburn ilk. Along the way, he created the character of Ruth Carson—the lead female role in *Night and Day* and one of the great roles for women in the whole of the theater—and drew the play together with a fast-paced plot that pointed up the disastrous result of the appearance in post-colonial Africa of Oxford-educated Marxists and members of the self-anointed New Class.

Unfortunately, he was also asking England's drama critics—most of whom were Oxford-educated Marxists and members of the self-anointed New Class—to appreciate the play. Unsurprisingly, when *Night and Day* opened, the London critics immediately began the immolation of Stoppard's reputation. Even they, however, had to admit the play included some typically wonderful Stoppard lines, as when the heroine rebuffs Wagner, with whom she had once had a one-night stand, by saying, "a lady, if surprised by melancholy, might go to bed with a chap, once: or a thousand times if consumed

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by passion. But twice, Wagner, *twice* . . . a lady might think she'd been taken for a tart."

The play is rarely revived, and it is indicative of Stoppard's self-deprecatory nature that on the occasion of its only New York revival, at a small off-Broadway non-profit house in 2001, he mostly avoided interviews with journalists and, moments after being introduced to the actors, asked them why they hadn't cut any of his lines. Regardless, *Night and Day* is not only a masterpiece but also a real improvement over his two preceding "serious" plays, *Travesties* and *Jumpers*.

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead

Possibly because it is pretentious and at times confusing, the 1974 *Travesties* was long a favorite with highbrows struck by the fanciful premise of a 1917 meeting of James Joyce, Vladimir Lenin, and Tristan Tzara in Zurich. Why it's still being revived is harder to explain. The play's two main characters, the British diplomat Henry Carr and the dadaist Tzara, are incredible figures on the stage and historical afterthoughts off it. The depiction of Lenin is not broad enough to be funny or scathing enough to be true, and the real-life character of James Joyce is probably too complex for any playwright to enter completely.

More curiously, *Travesties*, which has both limericks and quatrains, lacks the poetic quality that Stoppard elsewhere displays. Look at the 1972 *Jumpers*, for example, which is as rich with great lines as any play in the modern theater:

> *Dotty*: Archie says that the academics can look forward to rather more radicalism than liberalism. . . .
> *George*: Any party which calls itself radical might be said to have forfeited this claim if it *neglected* to take over the broadcasting services and send the Church Commissioners to prison.
> *Dotty*: It wasn't the Church Commissioners, it was property companies and Master of Foxhounds.
> *George*: I thought the Church Commissioners were a property company.
> *Dotty*: They were dispossessed, retroactively, as a humane gesture.

Jumpers manages to wed this wit to a serious inquiry into the philosophical arguments on behalf of God's existence, and it has a provoking mystery involving a dead acrobat. So why does it lack the punch and tension of such later plays as *The Real Thing* or *Arcadia*?

Perhaps the problem is the extremity of its unreality. The story never quite coalesces, and the characters sound alike. Writing the play under the influence of Peter Brook, Stoppard produced an experiment as much as a play. Stoppard commented at the time that he thought Brook's device of releasing butterflies to end a play far exceeded anything he could accomplish with words.

So, seemingly with this in mind, Stoppard focused the "theatrical" dimension of the play on the routines of a troupe of gymnasts rather than on explaining the murder central to the plot. (Stoppard's infatuation with Brook went so far then that he actually traveled to Iran to see the opening of a Brook-commissioned play whose title, *Orghast*, suggests its quality.) Moreover, in accepting the idea that stage business was a superior substitute for clarity of action and the union of words and character, it was as though the playwright were declaring an ignorance of Shakespeare and O'Neill and a belief in the dramatic principles underlying *Cats*.

Still, *Jumpers* did manage to teach Stoppard something. Only once more, with the 1988 *Hapgood*, would he fail to realize that even the theater of ideas requires plot and sustained development of its characters. And his talents were fully harnessed when he produced *The Real Thing* (1982), the play that fully established his reputation in America. Providing us with one of his few heroes who is a thinly veiled projection of himself, Stoppard began the play with a parody of the sort of Labour theater that had made the names of more than a few influential playwrights and then drew back to show his playwright protagonist's dim view of the hackneyed first scene. Throughout *The Real Thing*, Stoppard attacked deconstruction and the idea that language is arbitrary, making clear that he sees those who think language is a prison-house as men whose minds might be changed if they spent time in an actual one.

Critics' general view of George Bernard Shaw is that his work improved as he matured—which means that such fine early works as *The Philanderer* are ignored and such theatrical impossibilities as *Man And Superman* are studied. Tom Stoppard has suffered from the opposite pattern.

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Critics so admire his early work that they tend to ignore or disparage his later efforts.

The truth is that as Stoppard has aged he has grown, and his work has shown a greater power arising out of richer, more fully developed roles, something that was obvious in the two plays that seem to have cemented his standing: *Arcadia* (1993) and *The Invention of Love* (1997). Much has been said about the way in which *Arcadia*'s secondary subjects—landscape gardening and literary biography—parallel the mathematical concepts expressed in the play. But ideas are a poor substitute for passion, and it is a vivid passion that Stoppard brought to his tale of a gifted young girl's heart.

Critics who remain reticent about Stoppard have lately fallen back on accusing him not of being overly intellectual, but of being unduly unconventional in the way he structures his plays. It's true that both *Arcadia* and *The Invention of Love* are unorthodox insofar as the events depicted in them take place with the past and present existing simultaneously on stage and with scenes alternating between eras separated in time.

And certainly Stoppard's method of presentation does not conform to the nineteenth-century principles of the well-made play. Yet, in neither of these plays does Stoppard ask us to think that the *characters* we see are anything but actual people. In this sense Stoppard's later work is far more conventional than most of the work of Wilde or Shaw. Who really believes Cecily in *The Importance of Being Earnest* or Napoleon in *The Man of Destiny* is anything but a creature of the stage? Indeed, in an era of Pinter and Shepard, it is peculiar to complain of Tom Stoppard as unconventional.

Stoppard has also written two hilarious comedies that wisely do not bother to make claims of possessing substance: *The Real Inspector Hound* (1968) and *On the Razzle* (1981). The second (and funnier) of these is based on a Victorian play by Johann Nestroy, so loosely adapted that we must consider it a wholly new play. And Stoppard has just premiered in London a dramatic trilogy set in nineteenth-century Russia called *The Coast of Utopia*. Early reviews have been notably mixed, with some calling it brilliant and others declaring it boring. It may, of course, be that both statements are true. Stoppard has always rewritten his work dramatically *after* his plays' first premieres, and it's generally acknowledged that *Night and Day*, *The Real Thing*, and *The Invention of Love* were all markedly improved by cuts and changes in the New York productions that followed the London originals.

One of the most irksome aspects of the Nadel biography is that for all the pictures in it, it never takes the reader far inside the character of Tom Stoppard himself. The biography speaks little, for instance, of either of Stoppard's ex-wives, who might have given Nadel some clues.

But probably not enough to make a difference. We know something about Stoppard's serious anti-communism. We know the endless enjoyment he takes in the play of language, which led him both to embrace camp in the 1960s with *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* and reject postmodernism in the 1980s with *The Real Thing*. We know his fascination with nineteenth-century history and such early twentieth-century literary figures as James Joyce and A.E. Housman. We know that he has lived through one of the weakest eras in the history of art and somehow managed nonetheless to become a giant of literature. But about his interior life, we know nothing more than the little he has shown us.

Perhaps that is as it should be. Seeking the origins of comedy, Immanuel Kant once performed an analysis of a joke—which proved mostly that even good humor can't survive an attempt to understand how it works. Perhaps it is enough to know that the wit, breadth, depth, and prolific achievement of a onetime second-string Bristol theater critic with a high school education named Tom Stoppard increasingly marks him as the best expressly comic playwright English has ever known. ♦

The Furthest Diaspora

Did one of the Lost Tribes of Israel settle in India? BY DAVID LOWE

The centuries-old search for Israel's "lost tribes" has been experiencing a revival. Last May it was reported that a group of businessmen, scholars, and rabbis had joined forces to raise the awareness of the Jewish roots of the Afghan Pashtuns. And genetic research conducted several years ago suggested that the Lemba, a largely Christian Bantu-speaking tribe in northern South Africa and Zimbabwe, had an uncommonly high incidence of Y chromosomes shared by the Biblical priestly clan originating from the time of Moses and Aaron.

Across the Sabbath River
In Search of a Lost Tribe of Israel
by Hillel Halkin
Houghton Mifflin, 394 pp., $28

What is the origin of the Lost Tribes? According to several Biblical accounts in the books of Kings and Chronicles, the northern kingdom of Israel, which consisted of ten of the twelve tribes named for the sons of Jacob and Joseph, was conquered in the eighth century B.C. by the Assyrians and sent into exile. For some Rabbinical authorities of the Talmudic era, that was the end of the story, since they believed that the exiled tribes of the

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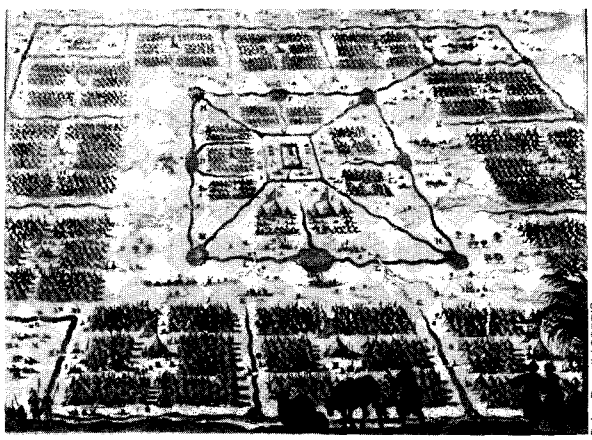
north had disappeared forever, assimilating into various local populations. (Today's Jews are descended from the two tribes of the southern kingdom.)

But for others, including the pre-Rabbinical Hebrew prophets, the Lost Tribes lived on in imagination and hope for some ultimate and glorious reunification. Their story would become enshrined in a number of popular legends, including one that placed them beyond a river called the Sambatyon, which is said to flow dangerously for six days in a way that prevents its crossing, and which is passable only on the Sabbath, when travel is forbidden.

According to Hillel Halkin in *Across the Sabbath River*, the search for the Lost Tribes eventually was transformed "from a vague fable of no practical consequence to a hallucinatory mixture of alleged fact and wild rumor that was to send the minds of men, and in time men themselves, on a fruitless treasure hunt lasting for centuries." By the twentieth century, a number of serious scholars had entered the fray, but by and large, their work has served to reinforce the view that the existence of Jewish ritual practice in remote communities can be attributed to a variety of factors, including intermarriage and conversion, that have nothing to do with ancient Israel.

One who believes otherwise—indeed, who has committed his life to the mission of "restoring Jewish souls" who stood at Mount Sinai—is Rabbi Eliahu Avichail, who runs an organization in Israel called Amishav ("My People Returneth"). Avichail has become the spiritual mentor of a group of Jewish communities in northeastern India that calls itself B'nai Menashe, the children of Menashe (a tribe named for the son of Joseph). His first contact with the community was made a little over twenty years ago after its leaders had written to the head librarian of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem requesting information about Judaism.

Their story was, to say the least, unusual. In the early 1950s, an angel revealed to a man named Chala that a largely Christian people of Tibeto-Burmese origin living along the Indian-Burmese border known as the Mizo were descendants of Israelites and should begin living by their true faith. In 1990, after several visits to the Indian state of Mizoram and its northern neighbor Manipur, Rabbi Avichail began bringing groups of "lost" Jews to Israel and arranging for their conversion leading to full citizenship. (The most recent such group arrived in late August, bringing their total in the country to just below seven hundred.)



Bojan Brecelj / CORBIS

The Twelve Tribes, in an illustration for an 18th-century Bible.

The rabbi's sixth trip to the region, one made dangerous by ongoing ethnic tribal warfare, took place in 1998. This time he was accompanied by Halkin, an American-born essayist and translator of major Israeli novelists. Halkin doesn't say much about what motivated him beyond the fact that he had intended to write a magazine piece, but his skepticism about the community's claims led him to play the role of Sancho Panza to Avichail's Quixote. Although he never wrote the piece, his curiosity was stimulated enough to return on his own the following year with two Mizo-born translators who had emigrated to Israel, and the result is this extraordinary book.

During his first trip to Mizoram, Halkin was introduced to a community that had undergone large-scale conversion to Christianity in the early part of the twentieth century under the influence of British missionaries but that aspired to connect with some remote but glorious past, as he puts it, "of real men and women who fought, killed, lusted, took slaves and prisoners, and worshipped God with animal blood. And were God's chosen!" At a convention he attends in Mizoram's capital city of Aizawl, Halkin witnesses a large hall filled with cheering delegates waving Israeli flags and demanding international recognition as an official Lost Tribe.

But he soon discovers that few Mizos have any concrete knowledge of their pre-Christian past. Some have been told about the practice of circumcision. There are also stories of four-cornered altars, a seven-day mourning period, and, most intriguingly, a document constructed from memory in the mid-1950s by one of Halkin's interlocutors, said to be based on local priestly chants. Included in the document are names of the Biblical patriarchs, references to key Biblical settings like Mount Sinai and Egypt, worship of a divine being known as "Ya," and lyrics from a song about crossing the Red Sea.

Upon his return to the region, it is known throughout the community that Halkin is conducting Lost Tribe research, and he is painfully aware of the high stakes placed upon his visit by the community. Many are hoping to be welcomed en masse to Israel under the Law of Return once it is proven that they are indeed descendants of ancient Israelites. Halkin is struck by their alienation from the dominant cultures of the region and takes note of how they share this sense of otherness with Jews throughout the ages. And he cannot help but be impressed by their tenacity. In a moving passage, he is asked to give an impromptu sermon at a Saturday morning service, and he responds by offering the observation that his previous visit had taught him "the strength of the ties binding Jews." He contin-

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ues, "You know that I hope to write a book about your possible descent from the tribe of Menashe. It would be exciting to discover that this belief is true. But it would not make you less Jewish if it isn't. Abraham did not have Jewish ancestors. He became a Jew by having the courage to be one. . . . You have the same courage."

But Halkin is not about to succumb to easy sentimentality. To the contrary, he is a careful investigator who is unwilling to accept at face value much of the hearsay evidence presented to him by his hosts, and it is the combination of empathy and tough-mindedness that gives the book its vitality. For example, he rejects the arguments of his hosts that visions, prayers, childhood memories, or even the recollections of conversations with those who practiced certain rituals before the coming of Christian missionaries prove descent from one of the Lost Tribes. He factors into all of these accounts the possibility that these are derived not so much from deliberate deception—although he doesn't always rule that out—as from retrospective adjustments of childhood memories based upon knowledge of Biblical texts introduced by missionaries. (He is particularly suspicious of exact parallels, as when he hears about a "themzong," or burial priest, performing third- and seventh-day rituals for mourners, a practice that can easily be traced back to the Book of Numbers.)

Assuming the role of historical detective, Halkin searches energetically for actual documentary evidence. First he discovers, among the written recollections of a leading member of the community, the existence of a will that asserts a militant defense of the old religion. What interests him more than its contents of Biblical names in old chants is the fact that it was written in the 1940s, prior to the visions that triggered the community's search for its true origins.

As he seeks the original copy of the will, he travels north to Manipur, an ethnically complex region of warring tribes. More than the Mizos, the Kukis of Manipur have preserved the old religion, owing primarily to the fact that the region's strong Hindu character had proven more resistant to the Christianizing influence of the British. It is there that a breakthrough occurs following an introduction to a little-known local ethnographer, a Dr. Khuplam, who had spent much of his childhood listening to old stories passed down through the generations by his ancestors. Referred to as "the old people," they had predated the Kukis in northeastern India.

Having traveled extensively through the region over the course of many years and made careful records of stories, priestly chants, and sacred rituals described by his elderly informants, Dr. Khuplam has compiled a manuscript in which Halkin discovers uncanny parallels with Biblical texts. He concludes that certain phrases known to the area's priests could not have been learned from Christian missionaries or attributed to other sources.

Does this lead to the conclusion that the "Children of Manmase" are, therefore, as they claim, descended from the actual Tribe of Menashe? Not exactly. Making use of his newly uncovered evidence, which includes references to actual places that exist today (such as Kabul) and others that once existed, Halkin develops a hypothesis that charts the possible eastward route taken by wandering Israelites and places them in Southeast Asia long before the Kuki and Mizo tribes migrated to the region. While his hosts are clearly disappointed to learn that their connection to a Lost Tribe is not a direct biological one, Halkin holds out the hope that future genetic testing in the community could well achieve results similar to those discovered for the Lemba of southern Africa.

Demonstrating throughout an exceptional command of a highly complex subject, Halkin tells his story with an engaging mixture of wit and irony. He has managed to produce simultaneously an affectionate account of a community's struggle to apprehend its true identity and a serious study that will no doubt stimulate future research. ♦

Gangsters, Then and Now

Lunching with the Sopranos of yesteryear. BY ARNOLD BEICHMAN

Back in the early 1950s I would occasionally lunch in New York with Jay Lovestone, the onetime secretary of the American Communist party. Joseph Stalin had ousted him in the 1930s, and Lovestone had subsequently become an anti-Communist strategist with an office at the International Ladies Garment Workers Union in midtown Broadway. He was very much clued into Washington intrigues and gossip, and in time, while still working for the AFL-CIO, he went to work for the CIA counterintelligence chief, James Angleton.

Arnold Beichman is a research fellow at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.

Whenever we lunched (always at noon), Jay took me to his favorite Italian restaurant—up one flight of stairs on West 55th Street, nothing visible from the sidewalk except the restaurant sign. Its cooking was the best, he said, and it was patronized almost daily by the top guns of the Mafia, from Joe Adonis, the *capo di tutti capissimi*, down to lesser capos. With such a clientele you could be sure that the osso bucco would be top grade and the pasta truly al dente. Superb olives, stuffed artichokes, and Italian bread.

Adonis's table was towards the back of the small, very unfashionable dining room. Anyone who stumbled into this place for lunch was seated by the front windows far from the Adonis table.

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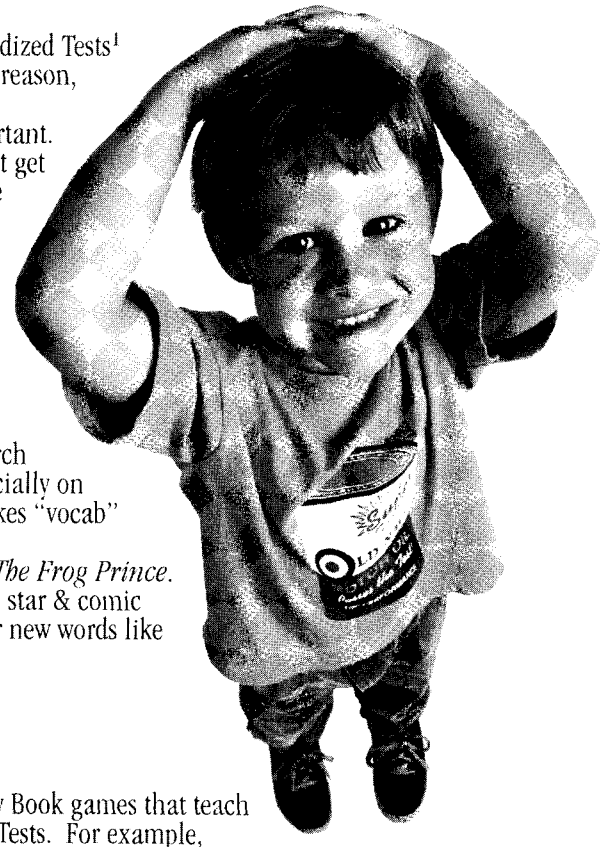
Before he gets into Harvard... he has to get out of the 4th grade.



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Because the padrone knew Jay as a regular we were seated halfway up and diagonally across from the Adonis table. I tried not to look too often at where the mobsters sat: Vito Genovese, Albert Anastasia, Johnny Dio, and others. One reason for the daily lunch was that it avoided using tapped phone lines.

Towards the end of the meal two big, hulking types sitting at a nearby table would get up and everybody knew it was time to go. "They're Adonis's bodyguards," Jay whispered. "Let them go first. You can never tell about what might happen on the way out if we leave now."

During the meal I would look on, marveling that one of the major mobsters in America and four or five gunsels were sitting a few yards from my table, eating the same veal parmigiana as I was. I couldn't hear what they were saying, and they never seemed to be concerned about our proximity. It all seemed so normal, so bourgeois. Adonis and the others seemed so ordinary. No flashy suits, no flashy ties. And when a stray diner and a companion dropped into the half-empty restaurant he was politely received by the padrone. (By one o'clock the place would become pretty full, and I supposed that Adonis and company didn't like to dine with a lot of strangers. On a few occasions when I went for dinner, I was received politely but the table in the rear was never occupied. A sort of dedicated place.)

I was reminded of all this as I read all the ballyhoo about *The Sopranos*'s new season. The character Tony Soprano, played by James Gandolfini, and the characters played by Tony Sirico and Federico Castelluccio look just like the occupants of the Adonis table. The successors to Joe Adonis (as an illegal immigrant and jailbird, he was deported during the Eisenhower era to Milan, where he died of natural causes) are now portrayed for us on television, with all their domestic troubles.

I can't say I'm enjoying Tony's sessions with his shrink, Dr. Jennifer Melfi. Can you picture Frank Costello yakking away about erectile dysfunction?

Back when Hollywood made movies about gangsters starring people like James Cagney, Edward G. Robinson, and George Raft, the nearest we got to their private lives was Cagney's squashing half a grapefruit at breakfast into Mae Clarke's stricken face in *The Public Enemy*.

The difference between the gangster movies of yesterday and today's *Sopranos* is that we wouldn't have wasted sympathy on Robinson as he tried to bully Humphrey Bogart in *Key Largo*, but now we listen with fascination as Tony tells Dr. Melfi all.

And yet, there is nothing like Robinson's last words in *Little Caesar*: "Mother of Mercy! Is this the end of Rico?" In fact, why don't the Feds get some RICO indictments of Tony and his mob? *The Sopranos* script reminds me of a bunch of Tyco-type business executives phonying up the books. Tony and his Mafiosi could be operating a giant corporation—except that we never get a look at what they really do with their surplus funds. And except that Tony Soprano and his henchmen are killers, of course, who should all be in jail. ♦

In Praise of Violence

Gerard Jones on why children really need to kill make-believe monsters. **BY JOHN PODHORETZ**

The other day, Joe—my fiancée's five-year-old nephew—decided to let me in on something. "Can I tell you a secret?" he asked. "My grandma bought me a special present." He paused. "It's called a gun."

I knew full well his grandmother had bought him no such thing. Joe isn't allowed to play with guns. "She bought you a gun, did she?" I said.

"It's a *real* gun, with *real* bullets," he said. "And I'm *not kidding*." "Oh," I said.

Then Joe added: "But grandma told me I could only shoot things that are already dead."

Earlier in the day, Joe had told me stray cats had been leaving droppings in his grandmother's flower bed. She was angry about it. Joe decided these acts of feline trespass were an outrage, and he said he wanted to kill the cats. In response, Joe's aunt told him that it wasn't right to kill living things—and Joe put it all together.

His hunger for a gun gave rise to the fantasy of being presented with one by his gentle and giving grandmother. But he didn't want the gun without conditions. He wanted the gun to come with moral strictures and boundaries.

Killing Monsters
Why Children Need Fantasy, Super Heroes, and Make-Believe Violence
by Gerard Jones
Basic, 261 pp., $25

Gerard Jones's *Killing Monsters* is an original and surprising new book that tries to cut through parental and societal hysteria regarding childhood play to explain why Joe's fascination with guns and his hunger for a moral framework are complementary impulses. Jones's work comes with the year's most provocative subtitle: *Why Children Need Fantasy, Super Heroes, and Make-Believe Violence.*

Killing Monsters is a book that demanded to be written, if only to provide a moment's respite from a piece of conventional wisdom that goes almost completely unchallenged. Over the past thirty years it has become axiomatic that depictions of violence

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in popular culture are utterly without redeeming merit. Critics on the left (such as Peggy Charren of Action for Children's Television) and critics of the right (such as Michael Medved) are in full-throated agreement on the evils of fantasy and fictional violence as depicted on television, in the movies, in comic books, in popular music, and in video games.

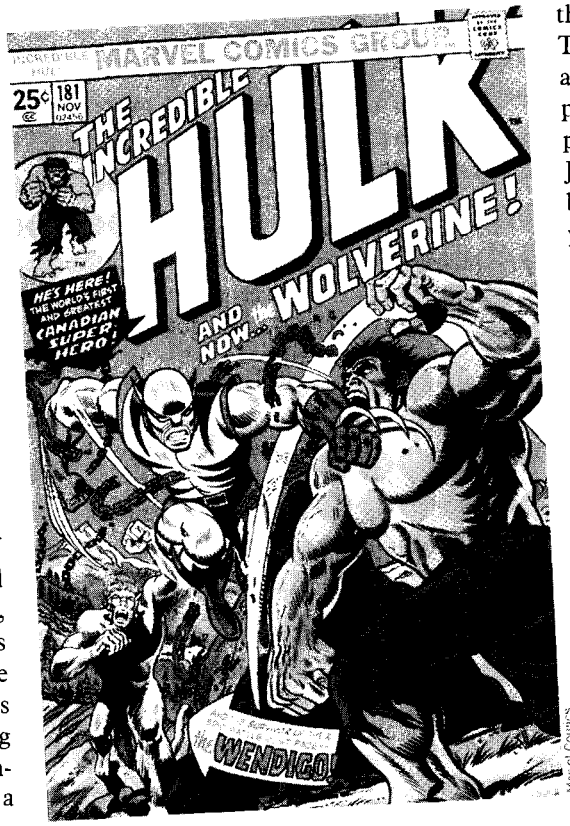
These critics believe that, at best, fantasy violence is a cause of bad manners and the general coarsening of American life—and, at worst, that cultural depictions of violence are responsible for the explosion of violence in the United States after World War II. These beliefs have become so commonly accepted that Congress passed legislation in the mid-1990s compelling all manufacturers of television sets to install a special piece of hardware that would make it possible for parents to prevent their children from watching offensive programming.

Proponents of the legislation, in seeking the broadest possible coalition in favor of it, dubbed it the V (for "violence)" chip. They could have called it the S (for "sex") chip, using the argument that depictions of sexual acts on television cause young people to engage in salacious behavior. But they didn't. Keeping kids from watching violent programming on television seemed to be a better rallying point.

Fantasy violence has become the cultural equivalent of fast food. It has no defenders, though millions consume it on a daily basis. Tastemakers and trendsetters revile it. It is deemed unhealthy and bereft of positive value even as it is condemned for being dangerously addictive.

The hunger to suppress fantasy violence goes beyond the V-chip and the motion-picture ratings system. It also takes the form of parents (like Joe's) refusing to buy their children toy guns. And yet almost every gun-banishing parent has had that eye-opening moment when her sweet little boy takes a piece of toast and chews it into the shape of a pistol, or picks up a stick from the yard and starts shouting "Boom boom boom!" There's more going on here than can be explained away by glib reference to television programs or toy weapons.

"The point from which any discussion of children and violent fantasy should begin is that most of them do like violence of one kind or another, and they know it," Jones writes flatly in *Killing Monsters*. "Respecting that is where communication, guidance and understanding start."



Marvel Comics

At first, Jones's treatment of the subject seems distressingly light and fluffy. His two previous books were about television situation comedies and comic-book heroes, and he was for a time a writer and editor of comic books himself. *Killing Monsters* seems at first the random thoughts and generalizations of someone who enjoyed fantasy violence as a child and has made money off it as an adult.

But despite its glibness, the book gradually becomes intellectually daring and honest, overflowing with fascinating and challenging arguments. Jones describes how, at the age of thirteen, he found revelation in the comic-book character called the Incredible Hulk: "He was a government scientist who had to struggle desperately to maintain his altruistic self-restraint—because his own anger set off a reaction in his body that transformed him, uncontrollably, into a brute of raw, destructive power. . . . Suddenly his body would explode with muscles that ripped through his clothes, and he'd hurl himself bare-chested and free through the walls around him." The Incredible Hulk shares with all fantasy legends for young people a consuming obsession with power and strength. The young Jones responded to the Hulk because as a depressed thirteen-year-old he knew that he was "repressing rage and pride and the hunger for power over my own life."

This specific fantasy spoke to Jones, and not because he was a victim of the entertainment industry. "The comic books were made by others and sold to me as a commodity," he admits, "but the desire to read them was *mine*." That desire was not manufactured. That kind of desire cannot be manufactured, no matter what parents may wish to believe. "A lot of us stumble over that as parents," Jones writes, "blaming what our children see for making them want things, forgetting that it's our children themselves who are doing the wanting. . . . Either children connect with a fantasy at the profoundest emotional levels or they quickly toss it aside."

Killing Monsters grapples with important questions about the ways adults perceive and misunderstand kids' thoughts, actions, and feelings. How can we understand children and what they need if we refuse to understand *why* they want what they want? Or, as Jones asks, "Why do they love what they love?" Blaming the entertainment industry for the fact that children are transfixed and transported

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goes against everything we know about human nature. "Each child's fantasies and emotional needs are very much his own," Jones writes, "even if he shares them with millions of other kids. When we burden those needs with our own anxieties, we can confuse and frighten children about their own feelings."

The problem is that enlightened Americans don't really want to believe that kids have the Incredible Hulk buried within them. Parents want their children to be happy and thoughtful and caring and wise. It's understandable, though wrong, to imagine that when kids go around whopping each other with sticks after they've been told not to, there's an external force to blame.

Which is where the scapegoating of the entertainment industry comes in. This is a particularly American madness that has lasted for more than a century. Most recently, the scapegoat has taken the form of televised violence and video games. Fifty years ago, the scapegoat was comic books, which were the subject of congressional hearings following the publication of Dr. Frederic Wertham's now-notorious expose, *Seduction of the Innocent*. One hundred and twenty years ago, the scapegoat was dime novels about cowboys and Indians in the Wild West. The censor Anthony Comstock called the editors of these books "Satan's agents to advance his kingdom by destroying the young."

The nature of the complaint against violent fantasy is that children will not be able to tell the difference between fantasy and reality. Jones believes that the problem here is with the adults, not with the children:

> We don't help children learn the difference between fantasy and reality when we allow their fantasies to provoke reactions from us that are more appropriate to reality. When a child is joyfully killing a friend who loves being killed, we don't make things clearer for them by responding with an anxious, "You shouldn't shoot people!" Instead we blur the very boundaries that they're trying to establish. We teach them that pretend shooting makes adults feel threatened in *reality*, and therefore their own fantasies must be more powerful and more dangerous than they thought. The result for the child is more anxiety and self-doubt, more concern over the power of violent thoughts, less sense of power over their own feelings, and less practice expressing their fantasies.

In the book's most original and telling insight, Jones suggests the problem arises from a failure to comprehend the nature of childhood play, which he believes is almost entirely metaphorical. Through invented games and stories, children work through their anxieties and express their secret wants. Since children are among the smallest and most powerless creatures on earth, their fantasies inevitably revolve around size and power. It's part of the very nature of fantasy that the power gets used. The gun must be fired. The Hulk must break through walls.

At every moment, the play of children is shot through with the knowledge that they are playing. They are not powerful. They are not big. And they are often very angry and frustrated because they cannot work their will as they would like to. When they play, they can express these feelings and release some of the tension and anxiety they provoke in others. But not if they are led to feel that their aggressive or angry feelings must be bottled up lest they provoke adult fear: "As adults we spend so much time taking deft steps away from our most powerful fantasies and emotions that getting whacked by the raw, visceral imagination of a child can be unsettling."

But these fantasies aren't merely about doing harm. If they were, they wouldn't have any resonance. Children place their hunger for violence in context. Jones tells the story of a little boy who told him about an imaginary world called Stuffyland, where all the stuffed animals live and everyone is safe. It all sounded sweet and lovely until, "with a huge, innocent smile, he explained, 'That's because there's a machine like a trap at the edge of Stuffyland and if a bad guy ever tries to come in it *chops him right in half!*'"

Stuffyland turns out to be a far more complicated and interesting place once we learn about the anti-bad-guy machine. It's also a more intrinsically moral place. The good guys are nice and gentle, just like the little boy who made them up. Nice and gentle people need protection from harm. And whoever comes to do them harm will deserve the punishment he'll get from the chopping machine.

The enjoyment people take from fantasy violence cannot be understood as mere enjoyment of violence. The power comes from the meaning behind the act. If a bad guy is hurting a good guy, the violence provokes outrage because it is unjust—and if, later, a good guy hurts that bad guy, the violence is satisfying because justice has been served. Indeed, Jones could have carried the point further, for the really frightening thing would be if injustice *weren't* punished. Children aren't really scared by the death of monsters. What scares them is the continuing *life* of monsters.

Killing Monsters offers some common-sense correctives to alarmist notions thrown about by our anxious culture. "Many critics have argued that entertainment teaches children that violence is a good way to settle problems," Jones writes. "Reality, however, is a good corrective to that. The first time a child imitates a Power Ranger by kicking a playmate and is rewarded with a crying friend, angry parents, an abrupt end to the game, and a sore foot, he learns that make-believe and the real world operate on fundamentally different laws."

Jones understands and respects the seriousness of the critics who want to suppress violent play. What these liberals and conservatives have in common is a hunger to educate and improve the young: "Because they are teachers, they believe deeply in the *literal* power of stories, and they want entertainment to teach the lessons that will improve us." But while entertainment can improve children, Jones shows that it does so in more complicated ways than moralizing critics grasp. ♦

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Al Gore won the 2000 election after narrowly carrying the state of Florida. The following September, terrorists attacked the United States and President Gore delivered this address to the American people.

President Albert Gore's Message To Congress
September 20, 2001

My fellow Americans, the United States has been viciously attacked. Many would say that we made ourselves vulnerable to this attack because of our dependence on fossil fuels. I have not raised this point, but many have raised it, and they have noted that the Republican party is in bed with the oil companies . . . a point that I have not raised but many others have.

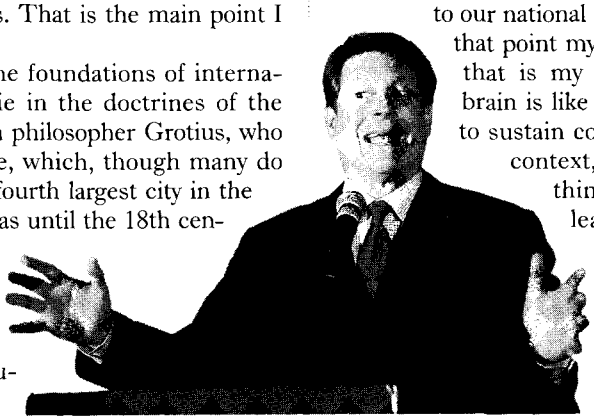
But in this high political season—and this is my main point—we obviously have a responsibility—and as one who has long warned against dependence on foreign oil let me be clear about this—to operate either within the framework of international law or outside the framework.

In my estimation, it is feasible to operate outside the framework of international law, but also let me add, in accord with our international treaties and obligations, the efficacy of operating within the framework of international law is also an effective means of maximizing our own responsibilities. That is the main point I would like to raise.

I have studied the foundations of international law, which lie in the doctrines of the 16th-century Dutch philosopher Grotius, who lived in The Hague, which, though many do not know it, is the fourth largest city in the Netherlands, and was until the 18th century under Spanish domination until the famous Battle of the Spoons of 1728. And as a student of history, which many consider me to be—and forgive me if my erudition is too overwhelming—let me just make my point clear. For this is my main point. And I wrote this speech myself, which should be obvious to you. The solution to the challenge we now face is neither to confront a fifth-rate military power nor to seek vengeance nor seek justice for our dead, but to avoid long-term, open-ended processes that might confuse the consequences of our emerging national strategy. And from a legal standpoint I believe we are fully justified in not acting the way we might deem it necessary to act.

That is the plan of action I lay before you tonight. It is clear. It is thoughtful. For I was one who supported unilateral intervention, and while others may cater their policies to satisfy the far-right-wing views of their party, we cannot jump from one open-ended task to another. A military response to this attack is justified, and some say we should undertake that, and I agree. And yet the degree of engagement we are willing to accept does not manifestly adhere to our national interests. I have made that point myself many times. And that is my main point. For my brain is like a laser. And if we are to sustain cooperation within this context, it will take clear thinking and thoughtful leadership. That is my core point.

And as for the moral justification for this course, let me just add that Rob Reiner observed



the weekly Standard
October 7, 2002

Photo: Getty

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The Six-Front War

Charles Hill is a research fellow at the Hoover Institution and a career minister in the U.S. Foreign Service.

Today's war on terrorism must be waged on six fronts:

1. In the world's hinterlands, where state authority has collapsed (as in Afghanistan), terrorist networks must be destroyed and nation building must follow.

2. In Western liberal societies, particularly Europe, years of benevolent unconcern about terrorist nests being built in their cities must be reversed through tough police actions.

3. Arab regimes must recognize their self-disabling practices (lack of freedom, suppression of women) as set forth in the recently released United Nations report. Arab states have used the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as a pretext for delaying democratic change. They must reform or go.

4. The Israeli-Palestinian peace process was destroyed when Islamist terrorism took hold in 2000; from that point on, no Palestinian leader could sign any agreement with Israel and live. **For peace to be contemplated, the terrorists must be defeated.** As that takes place, U.S.-led regional cooperation can help build the foundations for a Palestinian state and a two-state solution.

5. The war on terrorism must be conducted in the peripheral regions of the Muslim world where terrorists are trying to extend their presence. Here the United States can help, on a case-by-case basis, as in the Philippines, Indonesia, and Central Asia.

6. The war also includes "the axis of evil." North Korea, Iraq, and Iran make up a network dedicated to amassing weapons of mass destruction. Iraq and Iran act as obstacles to peace for Palestinians. All three commit human rights violations on a massive scale. Each represents an ideology that has chosen war with the international system of states: the communism of North Korea, the fascism of Iraq, and the Islamism of Iran.

All six fronts have one issue in common: the fate of the state. Thirty years ago, Joseph Strayer, a scholar of the origins of the modern state could write, "Today we take the state for granted." No more. This year, scholar John Gray notes that "a salient fact about our current circumstances is that in much of the world the modern state has collapsed."

Liberals want more from the state, conservatives less. But both could agree that the sovereign state, and the international system of states created to serve it, provides the only accountable, serviceable, and near-universal structure available. The 1990s saw damage done to this system, with no sustained effort to renovate it. New forces of globalization outpaced state powers. And intellectuals, bureaucrats, and activists disparaged the state as outmoded, calling for new forms of global cooperation beyond the reach of the old state systems like the European Union and the International Criminal Court.

For a decade now, the state has been undermined from below while ceding sovereignty to higher levels. Terrorists have been able to burrow within this weakened system. The task now is threefold: to reverse further deterioration to the state and its sovereignty; to recognize that international organizations can work when responsive to their members but not as near-autonomous entities; and to wage the war on terrorism until it defeats the Islamist ideology that defines itself against the modern state.

— Charles Hill

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